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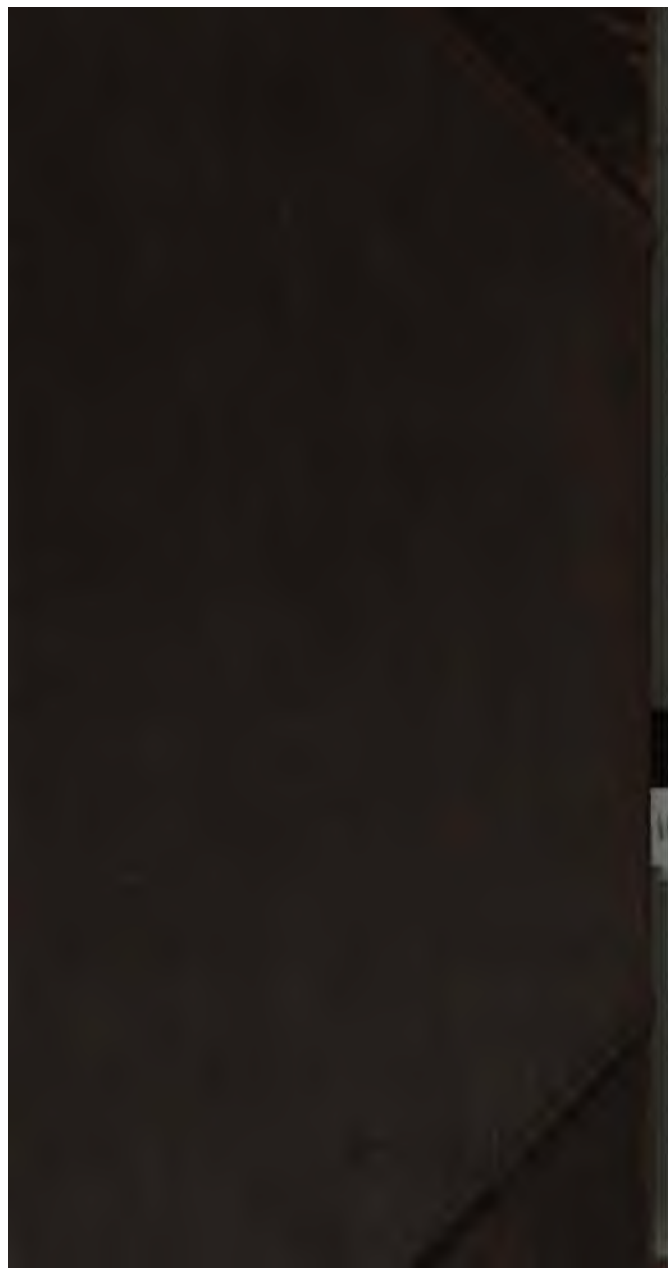
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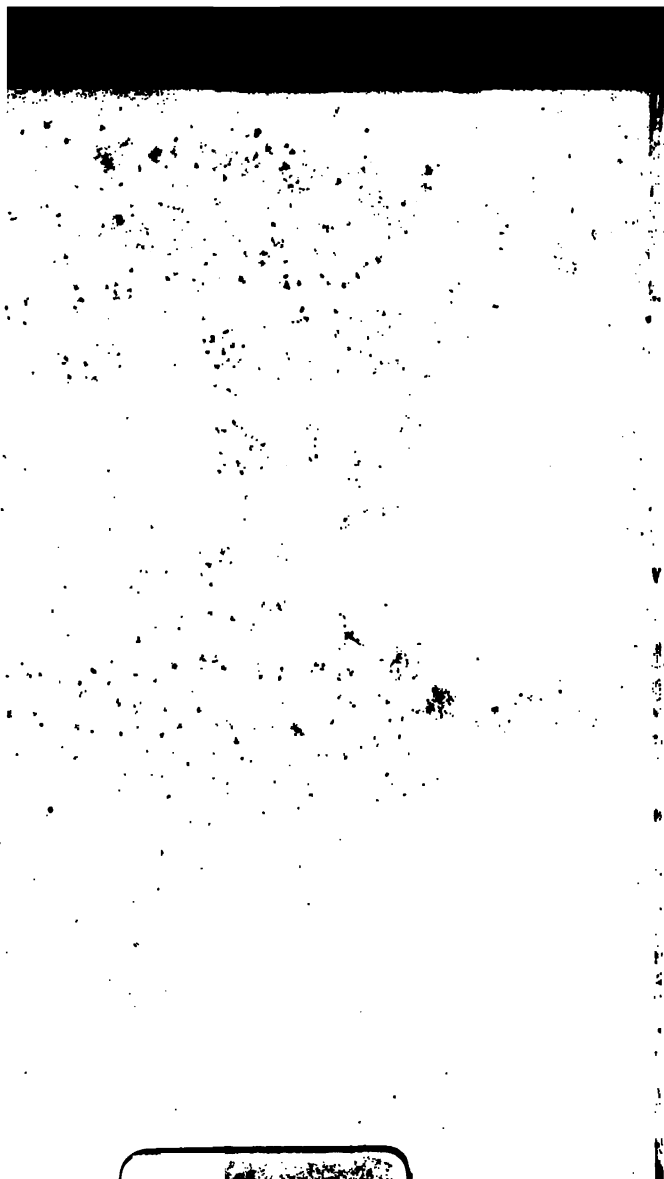
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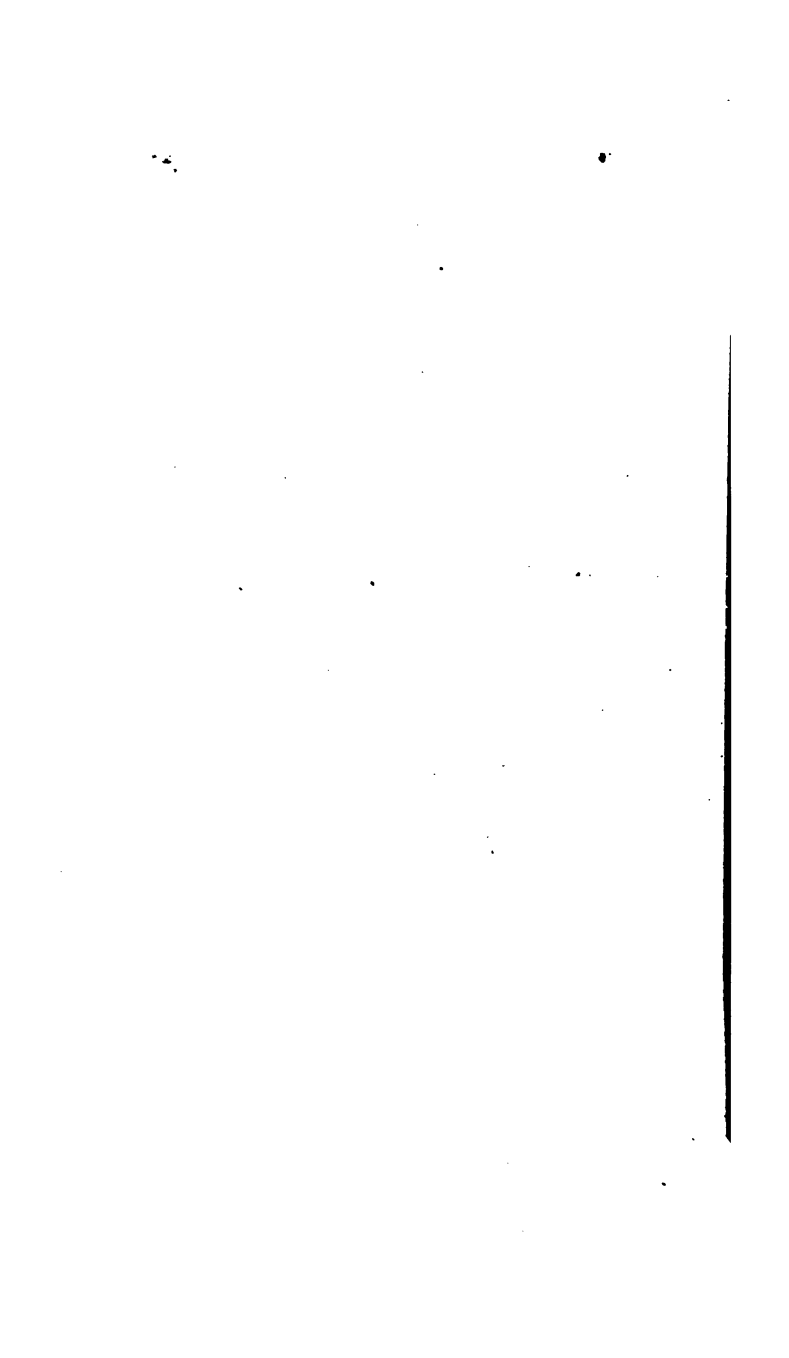
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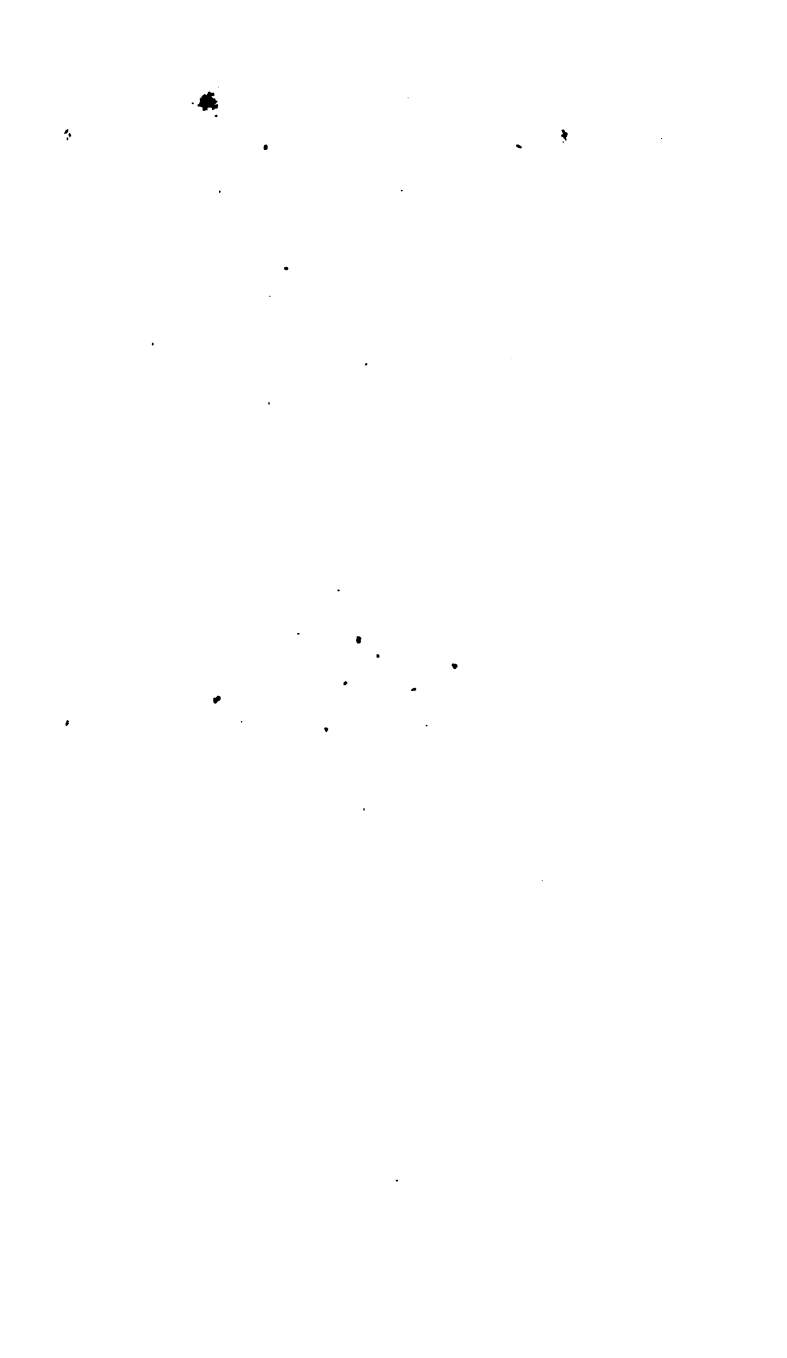












TRACTS

FOR THE

CHRISTIAN SEASONS.

TRACTS

FOR THE

CHRISTIAN SEASONS.

—

VOL. III.

SECOND SERIES.

FROM THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY
TO THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

—

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The groans of the Creation.

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, 1 Sam. xii. ; *Evening*, 1 Sam. xiii.
EPISTLE, Rom. viii. 18. GOSPEL, St. Luke vi. 36.

THE passage of Holy Scripture which the Church to-day brings before us in the Epistle, is one of a very striking character. The Apostle has just been speaking of the glorious privileges, and blessings, and hopes which God bestows on all members of His covenant of grace; and he tells them that he would have them think highly, very highly, of their present blessedness. And then, as though he feared lest their mind should dwell too long and too earnestly on the things of this present life, he checks himself; and in most glowing terms contrasts the sufferings of the life which now is ours, with the glorious life which shall hereafter be revealed to us. It seems as if he feared lest his words should lead any to forget the future in the present; to make much of that *which is outward, and unreal, and doomed to*

pass away; and to set little store upon "the things not seen," which "are eternal." And therefore, to make the picture more vivid and striking, he brings up "the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain," and earnestly waiting for that blessed time, when it "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." He brings it forward, as it were, upon the stage of this world, acknowledging how unable are the things of time and sense to satisfy its deep needs and fill its cravings after something, it knows not what, confessing that here it cannot find rest or peace, and therefore looking intently, half in doubt and half in hope, to another and a better life, for that peace which the world cannot give.

This is the meaning of the passage at the first view. But some deeper senses lie hidden in it. May we not then without irreverence try and unfold something of its inner meaning, so as to make it profitable for instruction to those who will "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" those Holy Scriptures, which, thus studied, are able, through God's grace, to make them "wise unto salvation?"

Beyond a doubt we may. In the foregoing *verses* the Apostle has spoken of "suffering with

Christ," as the condition on which we may hope to be "glorified together" with Him hereafter. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified together." That is, we are already adopted as sons into the family of God; and yet our sonship is a vain and empty title to us, if we do not make it a truth and a reality by a partnership in the sufferings of Christ. "And yet," we may suppose that he goes on to say, "the sufferings of this present time, however heavily they may weigh upon us now, are light enough in comparison with the glorious joys of heaven, which shall be ours. Sharp as the cross may lie upon us now, let us know that if we are but true to God, its bitterness will work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Bear it any how we must; and bear it we can with calm patience when we think of the sure and certain reward in heaven, compared with which our sufferings are as nothing."

Now this point, as you will observe, he goes on to prove by three distinct arguments.

First, by his own fixed opinion, "I reckon." Here *we have the words* of an Apostle, who has,

as it were, just cast up the account between this world and the next, and nicely balanced the one against the other. He has well weighed the matter of debt and credit, and finds that the latter far outweighs in the scales. Nay, he seems almost to say that so much does the one surpass the other, that it were an injury to compare them at all, to speak of them, as we are wont to say, in the same breath.

Again, he would lead us to the same conclusion from the general witness of mankind. "Look around," we may believe he says, "on the whole creation: turn your eye north and south, east and west; follow out your enquiry through the polished nations of Greece and Rome, and all the heathens who know not God: search out the belief of savage hordes, as wide apart as the poles, each differing in blood, in family, in customs, and in laws; and you will find that the common reason of mankind has led them to the same estimate of the sufferings of this life." And this is plainly the case. For though mankind in general has not been able to form to itself any clear and certain doctrine of another life, yet in every clime, in every age, it has had at the least, a vague hope, a dark glimmering of something *better than this weary being*; and these guesses

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after truth, being so general, are part of the light of conscience, and therefore cannot be looked upon as wholly false.

And then, he adds, that Christians share in this earnest longing after a blessedness which they cannot see. "And not they only," that is, the whole creation, the great mass of mankind, "but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body."

Let us strive to draw out each of these three points into somewhat more of detail.

1. When we look around us in this world, I suppose you will allow that we do not see virtue always rewarded, or vice always punished. It is to be confessed, I think, that here wicked men seem oftentimes to prosper in their ways, while good men "suffer," as the world is wont to speak. Cast your eyes on your friends and neighbours, on the inhabitants of your village, your parish, or your town; and what do you find to be the case? Surely you cannot say that the good man is generally "better off" in the things of this world than his poorer brother. Is it not rather true that you see *the faithful servants of God tried in the world as no other man is tried?*

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Has he not to lament the loss of earthly friends and relatives, and the fleeting nature of wealth and possessions? Has he not to weep for wife and children snatched from his side? for riches taken from him by force and fraud? or what is worse, perhaps for name and character defamed by the tongue of slander? Looking at this short weary life of three score years and ten, surely the balance of evil with him outweighs the good. Surely he would confess with Jacob, "few and evil are the days of my pilgrimage," could he fix his gaze on this narrow span of life alone. But this he cannot do. Be it then that of all men it is the good man who is made to feel most keenly the nothingness of this life, the vanity of all that the world holds so dear: be it that nothing is plainer than the fact that wickedness in this world often goes unpunished, while virtue lives a life of suffering; yet we know that God is a just and holy God; we know from His own most Holy Word that sin shall not go unpunished, that at some time or other vice shall fall and virtue triumph. A day then, we are sure, must come when all these things shall be set straight; when the balance shall be struck exactly, and rewards and punishments be given, when all shall have their right-

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ful due. But we have seen that the time of which we now speak, as a matter of fact, does not find place here. What then? It must come hereafter. If not in this life, yet in another. In that other life all will be made plain. God's justice as well as His holiness will then be set fully forth before men and angels. Then we shall see those suffering evil things, who in their life-time have received their good things; those who have here lived a life of pain and suffering, then blessed and rewarded. And as the one, for a brief and short-lived course of pleasure, have bought for themselves an eternity of pangs in hell, where there shall not be a drop of water to cool their tongues, but only flames to torment the body, and the worm that never dies to gnaw their souls, so too the true servants of God will be on that day raised to a life of glory and of happiness with which the few short hours of suffering in the body are not worthy to be compared. And therefore as St. Paul "reckons," so also may we; and we may well believe that our "afflictions which are but for a moment" here, are working for us, by God's grace and mercy, "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

2. *But in the second place, it is not merely*

from such reasonings as these concerning God's holiness and justice, that we may learn to look forward to another and a better life, but from the voice of the whole creation, groaning as in travail, and eagerly seeking to be delivered from its pains. It is a bold and striking figure of which St. Paul makes use in this chapter. Nothing in creation suffers pain, but it desires and seeks to be set free. Nay more, it expects to be set free. A state of pain is contrary to nature: the very suffering implies that such a state is imperfect. The deep and keen feeling of this burden of unrest, shews a consciousness that this cannot be the true law of our being, shews that all around us is not in keeping with what ought to be. And in spite of ourselves, we cannot help feeling that what ought not to be shall one day be remedied, that what is now in disorder and ill-tuned shall be brought to order and to harmony. Now this intense feeling is stamped very deeply on all that we see around us. Mankind and the beasts of the field, nay and the very ground itself, seem to have a share in it. How is this? when Adam fell by sin, and was shut out from the paradise, his sin was punished not only in himself. The brute creation suffered with man; and "the ground be-

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came cursed for his sake." And each of these we see is far from fulfilling the proper end of its being. The earth will not bring forth her fruits without daily labour; often the most careful labours fail to make her fertile: thorns and thistles and poisonous weeds she sends up in abundance, as though to mock our toil. In some of the beasts of the field we find savage and cruel natures, such as betoken their fallen condition. One race preys on another; war and strife seem the very law of their living. And could this have been always so? shall it for ever be so? Can a state of strife and discord be the end and perfection of beings framed and fashioned by Him who is a "God of order?" We think not. And then what shall we say of man? can we say that he seems to us here to fulfil the end of his being? Has he no thoughts, no wishes, no desires, which nothing in this world can satisfy? no longing after better things than here have ever fallen to his lot? And can these longings have been implanted in his breast by God, if there be nothing that shall answer to them hereafter? It is then beyond a doubt that, even apart from the covenant of God, and the light of His teaching, the very heathen have with *one consent confessed* that there must needs be

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another life, and have looked for it with more or less of "earnest expectation." They knew not indeed the true nature of that life, the fulness of those blessings after which they blindly groped and "felt." But yet those yearnings were not on that account the less true. Not more surely does the infant in its mother's womb struggle to gain the light of day, the child strive after boyhood, the boy after youth, the youth after manhood, than man, unable to find rest or repose in the things of earth, yearns after a better and a higher stage of existence, where his wants and desires shall be fully satisfied. Rob him of this belief in another life, and how does he differ from the brutes that perish? What hope can he have to sustain him in this weary pilgrimage below? The pomp and pride of kings pass away: the fame of the conqueror, the wisdom of the statesman, and the learning of the sage, will these fleeting things fill up the aching void, satisfy the yearnings of man's soul? They cannot and they will not. There is, then, and there must be, to answer to the feelings of his breast, some sure and certain future, some stage of being that shall be his own for ever hereafter.

3. And here steps in the Word of God Himself; *it tells the Christian what is that future*

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thing, after which mankind has so long been darkly "feeling." Much as the heathen of old were able to conjecture concerning it, yet they knew nothing for certain of its nature. Even the Jew himself, with all his graces and privileges, with the writings of the Psalms, the Law, and the Prophets in his hands, saw at best but a single ray of its brightness, and thus it was through the Gospel that life and immortality were brought to light. This is the exceeding blessedness of the Gospel. It not only tells us that there is a future life, and what it will be, but how we may each attain to it. It solves for us the riddle which here God sets before us, to try and test our faith, in the worldly misfortunes of the good and the prosperity of the wicked; by telling us that beyond the grave all these inequalities will be made even, that those who in this life have had their good things, shall then have the evil that they have deserved, while those who here, though despised and rejected of men, have served their Lord and Master truly, and by patient continuance in well-doing have sought the favour of their righteous judge, shall receive an hundred fold for all that they have suffered in this life, for all that they have given up for the *sake of Christ their Saviour*. And seeing

that we have thus surely set before us the exceeding happiness of a future life, so far outweighing the sufferings of this life which are but for a moment, it is not a matter of wonder that we, God's adopted sons and members of His covenant of grace, share in the longings of the whole creation after this better life. If others, who have no part nor lot in the in-breathings of God's Holy Spirit, sigh for that happiness of which they know not the full meaning, and groan in the prison-house of their body, how much more should this be the case with Christians, to whom the grave is not a dark and dreary vault, but the pathway that shall most surely usher them into light and life? It is so. In proportion as the Christian stirs up the gift that is in him by holy communion, by prayer, and the other means of grace, he feels growing daily stronger within his breast the "desire to depart and to be with Christ," which he knows to be "far better:" he looks earnestly forward to the day when God will take him into the mansion prepared for him in heaven, purified from the soiling stain of sin, and saved for ever.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The time of Peace.

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, 1 Sam. xv. ; *Evening*, 1 Sam. xvii.
EPISTLE, 1 St. Pet. iii. 8. GOSPEL, St. Luke v. 1.

THE Collect directs our wishes and our prayers to peace, freedom from persecution, and such security that the Church may joyfully serve God in all godly quietness.

Now those persons who can at once and without any more thought agree to such a prayer, and wish such ease and safety, would not be safe in time of persecution. Those who consider safety, ease, and security unmixed blessings, are disturbed, if not overthrown, when danger and trouble come. Their faith is shaken, as if God had deserted His Church and was not true to His promise : and they themselves having lived uncrucified lives, do not know how to resist unto scorn, rejection, spoiling of goods, and still less unto blood.

It is better then to wish for peace with some difficulty *than with too great forwardness.* It

is better to be firmly impressed with the truth that the offence of the Cross has not ceased and will not cease, that times of persecution purify and strengthen, and that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church; it is better to be firmly convinced of this, and to have some little difficulty in believing that a time of peace and safety can be blessed, than too readily to wish and seek that which our natural and unchristianized tempers lead us to desire.

1. First then we may remember, when we try to explain this matter to ourselves, that we are allowed by God to pray for a less good in place of a higher good, when the lesser good is accompanied by great pain or peril. God concedes this boon to our infirmity, subject only to one condition, that we pray submissively; that we do not seek comfort or safety positively, and certainly, but only so far and in such manner as He sees fit, who knows best and who loves us better than ourselves.

Thus, for instance, sickness is a great privilege. By being a state of suffering it gives us an outward likeness to our Saviour, and if we profit by it, an inward likeness also, which is far more. "There should be no greater comfort," says the *Church*, "to Christian persons, than to be made

like unto Christ, by suffering patiently adversities, troubles, and sicknesses." For He Himself went not up to joy, but first He suffered pain; He entered not into His glory before He was crucified. So truly our way to eternal joy is to suffer here with Christ; and our door to enter into eternal life is gladly to die with Christ, that we may rise again from death, and dwell with Him in everlasting life. And yet blessed as are sickness and suffering, our Saviour healed both, and so did His Apostles. St. James instructs the sick to send for the elders of the Church to pray for them that they may be healed. (St. James v. 14.) And the Church herself, whose words have just been mentioned, confesses the same facts. She acknowledges the two truths, that although suffering is a blessing, so also is its removal, and that we are at liberty to pray for relief as indeed she herself does in the same service.

So again, poverty, when rightly used, is a high estate and full of grace; and yet we are encouraged in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let our requests be made known unto God. (Phil. iv. 6.)

The same may be said of shame, and bonds, and death. *They are all lights from the Cross*

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of Christ. Yet in them all we are invited to pray for relief. We may consider it then a certain truth that we may pray for one good instead of another, pray to have our chastisement lightened or taken away, even although that chastisement is a proof that we are truly children and God truly our Father, with this one condition never to be forgotten, that in all we seek God's will, not ours, and resign ourselves sweetly to His decision.

2. We must also clearly understand that the relief which we receive after such prayer is a blessing, and more than this, that it is the greatest blessing. For remember that what we asked was not to have our will, but God's; not that He should give us health, or abundance, or safety, or success in one least degree beyond His holy will for our salvation. We tell Him all our sorrows. We say, "out of the deep have I called unto Thee: Lord, hear my voice. O let Thine ear consider well the voice of my complaint." We tell Him all, as a sick man tells his sickness to the physician, and when we have done this, we leave the rest to Him. We may be sure then that what He gives is best. If we asked what was not best, He would not grant it. He will give not what is best in itself, or best in *general*, but what is best for us. Sickness is not

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best, if after such submissive prayer He sends us health ; nor danger, if He gives us safety. And this is the meaning of St. James when he says, "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted : but the rich, in that he is made low : because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away." (St. James i. 9.) Let a man rejoice in what God orders for him. He may wish, he may pray, he is free to feel and speak before his heavenly Father. He may ask in submission, what he thinks best, and he will receive what God in His wisdom knows to be best, and that which truly is best.

We see then that the peace of the Church is a blessing, if God sends it : and a little thought will shew us also how it is a blessing. For when persecution ariseth, how many are offended and fall away ! how many weak brethren are lost, and go back, so that God can have no pleasure in them ; crucify the Son of God afresh, and make it impossible to renew them again unto repentance ! Many would fall away under persecution, thousands and thousands. Are we sure that we ourselves should not be amongst them ? Are we now so patient in pain, so bold against the laughter of fools, so firmly attached to the faith, so devoted to Christ, that

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neither shame, nor torment, nor death would shake us? O who shall say this? who shall be sure that his own love would still burn when "the love of many shall wax cold?"

Rather we may account the long-suffering of God as salvation; and believe that He is fitting us for what we ought to be ready to bear, but now are not.

Peace is a time for growth in grace, for preparation, for the weak to become strong. We shield the tender lamb from the March winds, but the sheep bears the storms of December. Peace is the spring-time of salvation; when soft buds put forth, and are not nipped before they open; when the seeds burst and the tender plant lifts its head in safety. In the peace of the Church the Good Shepherd carries the lambs in His bosom, and gently leads those that are with young.

Peace is a time for enjoying God's service. The Collect reminds us that we now serve joyfully. We do not rise in the dark night and steal out of the house of a heathen father, or husband, or master, and crouch along under the shade of street and lane, listening as we go, until we come to the assembly of a few fearful *Christians* in some vault, or cave, or wood, or

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rock, there in haste and fear to hear the precious word and to receive the bread of life, and then to part not knowing whether we shall ever meet again in this world; part soon perhaps to hear of some dear brother in Christ seized, condemned, thrown to the wild beasts, or burnt with fire, to listen to the brutal cries of the multitude, to see his mangled body, to know that the same sufferings are nigh unto ourselves and to those whom we love as dearly as ourselves: of all this by God's mercy we know nothing. In perfect safety we hear the Church bell announce the holy day: we put on our best: we go forth with cheerful countenances: we meet and greet our friends by the way: we take our own place in our own Church; worship in the words and places of our fathers, see the font in which they and we were born, the altar from which they and we have feasted on the bread of life.

This is to "serve God joyfully in all godly quietness," and is "the blessing of peace" which the Lord hath given His people.

Peace also has its work as well as its pleasure. Persecution throws down our altars, burns our temples, destroys all the carved work with axes and hammers. The abomination of desolation, standing where it ought not, pollutes the holy

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places. Peace builds up, purifies, dedicates again, restores the sanctuary and service to the "beauty of holiness." In peace we are called upon to perfect our work at home, and to look abroad for the salvation of others,

At home we teach the young and comfort the old ; we clear the faith of difficulties, and dive deep into doctrine and learning by meditation and study ; we perfect the discipline of the Church, and extend her sphere and means of action. In other words, peace founds schools and colleges, and alms-houses and hospitals. Peace gives birth to holy doctors and scholars. Peace enacts the canons of the Church ; perfects her service ; builds chapels and churches and reverend cathedrals. Peace sends "forth missions to distant lands : and bishops, priests, and deacons spread the kingdom of Christ, and fulfil the promise of the Father, "Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession."

Such are the blessings and the work of peace. Woe be to us, if we expect the one without the other. Woe be to us, if we would enjoy to ourselves, and having freely received, refuse to give ! If such be our peace, the sooner the storm *bursts upon us* the better. Any thing rather than

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that we should live softly, die peacefully, and wake to perdition.

Now then, since peace is a blessing, and one which we may desire and seek, how shall we obtain it? The Epistle answers, by holiness, and by prayer.

1. By holiness, and especially by that part of it which is the exercise of charity. They who would have peace must exercise it. They who would have a blessing must bless. They who would be saved must save. St. Peter seems to issue again the promise of the Psalmist, joining it with Christian duties; "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." And then he brings in the Psalm, (Ps. xxxiv.,) "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good: let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." True indeed that St. Peter is here thinking far

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more of the eternal blessing and the peace of heaven, as appears from his going on immediately to speak of persecutions, and of happiness and safety in the midst of them. Yet as there are Gospel promises for this life as well as for the next, we may consider his use of the Psalm as having this meaning also, a promise of peace to peace, both here and hereafter, both now and for ever.

And this doctrine is confirmed by the Lesson of this day. The first morning Lesson told of Saul's disobedience and of the withdrawal of God's protection thereon. "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king." The second Lesson shews the threatened punishment fulfilled. Peace was gone. So far from Israel being now invaders, they were invaded: so far from conquering, day after day they refused to battle. Goliath insults them, and the Philistines mock at them; "and is there none of all Israel that will answer to the champion otherwise than with his heels? Who is the courage of him that was higher than the shield of Israel from the shoulders upward? The time was when Nahash the Ammonite had made the tyrannous demand of the right eyes of Israel."

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Gileadites, that Saul could ask unabashed, ‘ what aileth the people to weep?’ and could hew his oxen in pieces to raise the spirits of Israel ; and now he stands still, and sees the host turn their back, and never so much as asks, what aileth the people to fly? The time was, when Saul slew forty thousand Philistines in one day, and perhaps Goliath was in that discomfiture, and now one Philistine is suffered to brave all Israel forty days.”

Again, perhaps, still more remarkably this Lesson contains an example of cursing and of its fruits. “The Philistine cursed David by his gods,” but David, putting his trust in God only, and by his words, meaning, “the Lord rebuke thee,” “prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine and slew him.” Thus Goliath “delighted in cursing,” and according to the Scriptures “it happened unto him ;” but David inherited a blessing, “for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers : but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.” Therefore, although persecution is no proof that the Church is sinful or out of charity, since “whom the Lord loveth *He chasteneth*,” and since the purest ages were

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the most afflicted, yet we may expect trouble as the punishment of ungodliness and want of love, and only by "seeking peace and ensuing it," can we hope for safety and freedom from sorrow.

2. We are to seek peace by prayer. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." The very declaration that the ears of the Lord are open to the prayers of the righteous is a call to pray. Thus the collect, "Grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that the course of this world may be so peacefully ordered by Thy governance, that Thy Church may joyfully serve Thee in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Thus every day at morn and eve the priest says, "Give peace in our time, O Lord," and the people answer, "Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, O God." Thus each morn and eve also we use a collect for peace, and for the same we pray also in the Litany, and specially against persecution; as also other times besides.

Yet let us not so wish for peace as not to wish for persecution also, if such be God's will. St. Peter in the Epistle dwells more upon peace amid trouble, and that peace after trouble which dwelleth in heaven. "But, and if ye suffer for right-

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eousness' sake, happy are ye ; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled ; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." And in the same Epistle, " For as much then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind."

As was said before, suffering is the highest state and the best state in the world ; in itself, because it is most like Christ, and the highest and best to us as well, whenever we are fit for it. Let us firmly believe this, and continually remember it ; because our natural inclination would lead us first to forget, and then to doubt. Let us have sure faith in God in danger as in safety. If He can keep us from worldliness in comfort and security, surely He can keep us from cowardice in want and peril. If He can make us love Him in peace, He can make us trust Him in persecution.

Far be it then from any one of us to join in that timid cry of those who believe not, or love not : " What will become of the Church if she is robbed of her property ? We dare not do our duty, for the State will not let us. We cannot restore our discipline, amend our laws, send forth apostles, because we are in chains, and we must not run *the risk of persecution* or loss ; not for

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fear of ourselves, but for the sake of weak brethren, and lest if the Church should be spoiled the poor should lack pastors." Away with such fears for ever! Let us not be hasty, nor rash, nor lightly throw away peace and comfort; for they are real blessings, and moreover they are God's gifts. But should the time come when we must run risks, and suffer loss, lest the truth should be corrupted, or the Church prevented from discharging her duty, then let us be equally calm and sure that persecution also is a blessing, and a choice gift of God. Let us take joyfully the spoiling of our goods, knowing in ourselves that we have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. (Heb. x. 34, 35.)

This is indeed no light matter. It is more easy to speak of than to do. It is very hard to bear peace well, and very hard to bear persecution well. He that does the one can do the other. He that now seeks to hold loosely to comforts will let them go readily when need is. Let us live simply: let us use our possessions as not our own but God's: let us govern our appetites and learn to bear hunger: let us *worship* God at an inconvenience in the cold

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arly morning, when few are with us, and when the world smiles at us : let us pray also in the thick darkness, in the watches of the night ; and then if persecution should come and take away our homes and food, we shall not be shocked and overthrown : and if it closes the doors of our churches, the darkness of midnight orship and the cold and dreariness of vault or cave, will not chill our devotion. Only let us refer to God, and then God's gifts, joyful or sorrowful, will be blessings.

JERUSALEM, that place divine,
The vision of sweet peace is nam'd ;
In Heaven her glorious turrets shine,
Her walls of living stones are fram'd ;
While angels guard her on each side,
Fit company for such a bride.

She deck'd in new attire from Heaven
Her wedding chamber, now descends
Prepar'd in marriage to be given
To Christ, on whom her joy depends.
Her walls, wherewith she is enclos'd,
And streets, are of pure gold compos'd.

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The gates, adorn'd with pearls most bright,
The way to hidden glory show ;
And thither by the blessed might
Of faith in Jesus' merits go
All those who are on earth distress'd
Because they have Christ's name profess'd.

DRUMMOND.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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Causeless anger, and the unkindness of dislike.

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, 2 Sam. xii. ; *Evening*, 2 Sam. xix.

EPISTLE, Rom. vi. 3. GOSPEL, St. Matt. v. 20.

IN the sermon on the mount is embodied the moral law of the New Testament, as the moral law of the Old Testament was embodied in the Ten Commandments.

Now as both these laws came from Almighty God, they must be, therefore, substantially the same : and yet their apparent differences are very great. For the law that was given by Moses deals only, as man sees it, with the outward actions ; but the pure and holy law which came by Christ Jesus, and under which we live, rules the inward thoughts and affections.

In one view, then, the Christian law is far more severe than the Jewish, in that far more is required of Christians than was required of Jews ; more care, more vigilance, deeper self-knowledge, more *complete self-denial*.

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And yet the law of Christ, the law that proceeds from one so full of love and mercy, must be a law of love, and really the expression of tender compassion for the weaknesses and sufferings of men. And so it is ; St. Chrysostom says that in this especially we see our Saviour's mercy and love, that He forbids the very first motions of evil within : for it is really easier to restrain the first beginnings of desire than to hinder the fulfilling of desires which have been long indulged. It would be most cruel to allow men to cherish a burning flame within them, and then forbid them to feed it with its natural fuel ; for then it would certainly turn its fury inwards and consume themselves. Therefore, it is in great mercy that our heavenly Master not only forbids adultery, but commands us to turn away our eyes from looking on a woman to lust after her ; not only condemns murder, but warns us solemnly against the first risings of causeless anger, which, recklessly indulged, would lead to murder.

But there is a further kindness in thus laying down a law for the affections and will, because our true happiness requires the entire conquest of evil within us. So long as the root of bitterness lives, we are not secure against the produc-

1 of its deadliest fruits. So long as the principle of evil is within, there is a hold for the influences of the prince of evil, and a bar to the flowing of the love of God, in which true happiness consists.

And lastly, the Gospel law is most truly merciful and gracious, because if its precepts are more deeply and severely strict than other precepts, there is more abundant grace and strength given to observe them.

It was, therefore, in great mercy to men's souls, that our Saviour, after reminding His disciples that it had been said in the older law, 'Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill all be in danger of the judgment,' added, 'But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment.' He speaks neither of deeds, nor of words, but only of thoughts or feelings. Thus He goes to the root of the matter. For angry words proceed from angry feelings, and the malicious intention of the murderer is deeply hidden in the heart, before it is shewn in the act of killing. Ever since Cain rose up against his brother Abel and slew him, this evil spirit has been haunting the homes and influencing the hearts of men, and marring the harmony

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of neighbourhoods, towns, villages, and families, separating chief friends, alienating children from their parents, and husbands from their wives, and sowing discord among brethren; insomuch that even between the blessed Paul and Barnabas the contention was so sharp that they departed asunder the one from the other.

Now there is one peculiar form of this evil on which I wish to dwell in this tract, to which I fear we most of us give way far more than we ought, and often perhaps unconsciously, or at least without the thought of how much guilt we thereby incur. It is quite certain that we, most of us, very often dislike a person without a cause, but very seldom without guilt; which it were well if we would reflect upon more than we do. There are persons whom we have scarcely realized that we dislike, much less do we know why we dislike them; yet the mention of their names calls up unpleasant feelings, and unless we put a bridle on our tongues, we speak unkindly of them, almost before we are aware.

Again, we frequently imagine we have good cause to dislike and be angry with people, when we really have none. And this arises in various ways, sometimes from misapprehension of their *words or ways*; sometimes from false reports;

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sometimes from unintentional unkindness on our parts, inducing displeasure or coldness.

Sometimes, again, bad feeling arises in this way. A person does us wrong, or wrongs some one we love; and afterwards comes to see his error, and is sorry for what he has done, and before God repents him of the evil; but either because he supposes we have not noticed or forgotten it, or because he has never been taught the duty of making reparation he has neglected to acknowledge his unkindness. Meanwhile we, in ignorance of his repentance and consequent change of feeling, continue to look distrustfully upon him, or even regard him as an enemy, and speak severely of him, remembering his past unkindness after he has long felt kindly towards us. This unhappy state of misunderstanding is one consequence of our not endeavouring to forget the wrongs which we are bound at once to forgive.

But in whatever way the feeling arises, it is quite certain we meet with many persons in the world disliking each other, and continuing to dislike each other for many weeks, or months, or even years; sometimes indeed with sufficient cause, on one side or other, but very frequently *without any cause at all except the want of a*

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better understanding of each other's deeds or motives. And it often happens that a third person can evidently see this to be the case, because he knows, and loves, and is beloved by both; and is therefore assured that if they knew each other as he knows them, they would esteem and love each other as he esteems and loves them.

If then, my brother or my sister, there be any person for whom you entertain dislike, and against whom you are tempted to feel and speak unkindly, either you know not why, or for some cause which now appears to you a sufficient ground for such feeling, do not make up your mind that you are justified in disliking him; nor imagine that you cannot overcome your dislike. Perhaps the day may come when you will love him, and trust him, and find consolation in his friendship. Take heed therefore how you lay up food for sorrow and repentance, when you shall come to be reconciled to him with whom you are now at variance.

But whatever cause there may be for anger, and still more so if there is no cause but an imaginary one, it can never be right that one Christian should continue to cherish unkind feelings or speak unkind words of another. "Whoso-

ever," says our Saviour, "is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger." But who thinks he is angry without a cause? No one. Every angry man thinks he has a cause for his anger, and is ready enough to flatter himself that his cause is good. Let no man therefore suffer his conscience to rest satisfied because he fancies he has a cause for his anger. For it is very possible that he may originally have had a cause, and yet is now incurring constantly-increasing guilt by indulging feelings which were not perhaps at first sinful: for no cause can justify continued resentment. "Be ye angry," says the Apostle, "and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

We see, therefore, that no cause for anger will justify its long continuance; and feelings of enmity, cherished until they settle down into deep dislike, or allowed to find utterance in sarcastic or malicious words, will over-cloud the Christian soul with gross spiritual darkness: for the sun will go down upon us, the Sun of Righteousness, in whom is all our light, and life, and hope, and we shall be left to indulge our evil passions for ever in the hopeless gloom of alienation from God, where envy reigns supreme, and love finds no *entrance*.

But the evil consequences of unkindness towards others end not with ourselves. If angry feelings lead to angry words, then angry words are almost sure to stir up anger in those to whom they are addressed and of whom they are spoken: and he that is reviled is tempted to revile again, and too often yields to the temptation. Thus we not only sin ourselves, but lead another also into sin. But angry words addressed to those we are displeased with, are not the worst; unkind words spoken of them behind their backs are more injurious to him who speaks, and him who hears, and frequently to him of whom they are spoken.

For let no one imagine his words will go as far as he intends or wishes, and no further. For as when a man scatters thistle-seed in the air, so are unseasonably bitter words thoughtlessly spoken. The wind wafts not the winged seed more lightly than the tale-bearer spreads the report of evil. Were it otherwise, unkind words spoken of the absent would not do so much harm; according to the saying of the wise man, "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth."

Now many persons will repeat an ill report to

every one they meet, from the mere pleasure of spreading it. But there are also others who have no pleasure in evil-speaking, who yet imagine it to be a kindness to carry the evil report to him of whom it is spoken. As soon as ever they hear a person falsely accused, they go and tell him what is said, and who has said it; persuading themselves that in pursuing this course they are doing an act of justice or of kindness. But surely this is a perverted notion of justice; and the supposed kindness frequently is found to be the greatest cruelty. Defend the absent when he is accused. Speak for him as much as truth permits, and charity enjoins. Deny untrue accusations upon the best testimony you can find; but never carry words of ill reports to the person slandered, unless it is found to be absolutely necessary to vindicate his character by testimony which none can bring forward but himself.

He is most unkind who speaks the word of false accusation first: but next unkindest is he who without sufficient cause carries tidings of the accusation to the person accused.

But if in any way the evil report is conveyed to the person accused, consider how hard it is for him to bear! How few can bear it with patience, fewer *still can bear it without much suffering!*

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For it is hard to bear to be evil spoken of before our faces ; but far harder to hear of the evil that is spoken of us behind our backs. And if one who hears through a messenger of evil-tidings the unkind words that have been spoken of him by those whom he has hitherto respected and loved, is led to return ill-will for ill-will, and hard words for hard words, how grievous is the sin of him who gave occasion to the evil by originating or spreading the false report ! It may be he will never know on earth the sin he has occasioned in his brother ; but in the day of judgment he will have to answer for it, because he restrained not his tongue, and because he had no pity.

After this manner then, the manner I have attempted to describe, causeless anger spreads widely among neighbours, and kinsfolk, and friends. Thus the flame of discord is lighted, and the breath of the evil one fans it ; till the peace of many minds is lost, and the burden of sin is made heavier in many a conscience.

Subdue then, my brother, the first risings of causeless anger or groundless dislike ; or if the evil spirit have found entrance, drive it out by earnest prayer, and the penitent remembrance of your own sins. Remember that all abiding

anger is anger without a cause, and will be punished accordingly. Above all, restrain your lips from speaking angry or malicious words, (for this will brand in the sinful feeling more deeply,) and rule your tongue by the law of kindness. (Vide Prov. xxxi. 26.) And consider, if he that to his face shall call his brother "Raca," is in danger of the council, and he that shall say "thou fool," is in danger of hell-fire, how much shall he be punished who treacherously reviles his brother when he is absent.

On the other hand, let no one think that he is justified in nourishing ill-will against those who have slandered or misrepresented him. Your brother's anger or malice is no justification of yours. Your sin will not be excused on the plea that he sinned first. Besides, forbearance on his part who receives the offence, affords the only hope of a speedy reconciliation. A one-sided quarrel is soon made up: but where both parties cherish ill-will, peace will hardly find entrance. And remember, it is especially charged us not to render evil for evil, or railing for railing; but as much as in us lieth we are to live peaceably one with another.

If you cannot help hearing the report of unkind *and untrue imputations*, forgive and forget

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as soon as possible. Better, far better, it were that you should never know the unkindness that has been done you, but if the knowledge of it find you out against your will, think as lightly of it as possible. Remember how thoughtlessly people speak, without deliberate ill-will. Remember how quickly harsh, cutting words are spoken in anger (perhaps you have spoken such yourself) which are not meant a moment afterwards. Remember it is quite possible a person may feel unkindly towards you at one moment, when his thoughts are fixed upon something you have done to annoy him, and soon afterwards all thoughts of enmity may have died away, and when he meets you he may speak, as he feels, kindly. In this case, whatever he may have said of you in the moment of irritation, you are to blame more than he is, if you reject his expressions of good-will.

Now if there be one among those who read this tract, whose conscience condemns him in this matter, to him I say, Do not be displeased with the author for reminding or convicting you of your fault, but take revenge upon yourself. Search and prove your own heart, and bring forth the sins there hidden to the light, and look upon them till you hate them ; and beg of God *to blot them out* in the precious blood of Christ,

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that they appear not against you for your confusion in the judgment which He has appointed. In this matter, as in other matters, "Judge yourself, that you be not judged of the Lord." And if you would save your own soul, and escape the guilt of hurting the souls of your brethren for whom Christ died, keep the door of your lips that they speak no evil of your brother. And if you would disappoint the spirits of evil who would fain make their home in your heart ; and if you would rejoice in the presence of God's Holy Spirit, and be under the care of the good and gentle angels, and abide in your Saviour's love, and become fit for heaven and the joys of heaven, when heaven is given to the righteous, keep guard over the thoughts and purposes of your hearts.

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice : and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

O well would it be for us, if we would take heed to these godly exhortations ! The very sound of them is pleasant to our ears ; how *much more would the practice of them be plea-*

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sant to our hearts ! Kindness, gentleness, mercy, truth, long-suffering, goodness, how grateful they are when exercised towards ourselves, and how naturally and pleasantly we exercise them towards those whom we love, and from whom no misunderstanding has estranged us ; then why not towards all ? Why should we mar the fair proportions of our obedience ? Why should we love one and hate another ? Why do good to those who do good to us, and to those we are offended with do evil ? Why dim the brightness of our spiritual joy with the base earthborn clouds of envy and ill-will ? Why lose our Saviour's love, by offending those for whom He shed His blood ? Why grieve the Spirit of God, by whom we are sealed to the day of redemption !

Let us love not only those who love us, but those who love us not. In one thing let us be obstinate, namely, in continuing to love those whom once we have loved ; as long as it is possible let us love them with that peculiar love which distinguished them in our hearts from the multitude of our acquaintances ; and when through their long continued alienation that shall be impossible, yet always let us think of them with tenderness and affection. Let us *forget their unkindnesses* if we must believe they

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been unkind; let us cover their failings; let us seek to do them good; let us pray for their peace and prosperity; let us watch for the day when they will again permit us to take their counsel with them as of old, and again walk together with them in the house of God as friends.

REMEDIES AGAINST ANGER.

PRAYER is the great remedy against anger; for it must suppose it in some degree removed before we pray, and then it is the more likely it will be finished, when the prayer is done. We must lay aside the act of anger, as a preparatory to prayer; and the curing the habit will be the effect and blessing of prayer: so that if a man to cure his anger resolves to address himself to God by prayer, it is first necessary that by his own observation and diligence he lay the anger aside, before his prayer can be fit to be presented: and when we so pray, and so endeavour, we have all the blessings of prayer which God hath promised to it to be our security for success.

If anger arises in thy breast, instantly seal up thy lips, and let it not go forth; for like fire, when it wants vent, it will suppress itself. It is good in a fever to have a tender and a smooth tongue, but it is better that it be so in anger: for if it be rough and distempered, there it is an ill sign, but here it is an ill cause. Angry passion *is a fire, and angry words are like breath to fan*

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them ; together they are like steel and flint, sending out fire by mutual collision. Some men will discourse themselves into passion, and if their neighbour be enkindled too, together they flame with rage and violence.

Humility is the most excellent natural cure for anger in the world ; for he that by daily considering his own infirmities and failings makes the error of his neighbour or servant to be his own case, and remembers that he daily needs God's pardon and his brother's charity, will not be apt to rage at the levities, or misfortunes, or indiscretions of another ; greater than which he considers that he is very frequently, and more inexcusably guilty of.

Consider the example of the ever-blessed Jesus, who suffered all the contradictions of sinners, and received all affronts and reproaches of malicious, rash, and foolish persons, and yet in all them was as dispassionate and gentle as the morning sun in autumn ; and in this also He propounded Himself imitable by us. For if innocence itself did suffer so great injuries and disgraces, it is no great matter for us quietly to receive all the calamities of fortune, and indiscretion of servants, and mistakes of friends, and unkindnesses of kindred, *and rudenesses* of enemies ; since we

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have deserved these and worse, even hell itself.

In all reasonable discourses excuse the faults of others, considering that there are many circumstances of time, of person, of accident, of inadvertency, of infrequency, of aptness to amend, of sorrow for doing it ; and it is well that we take any good in exchange for the evil which is done or suffered.

Upon the rising of anger instantly enter into a deep consideration of the joys of heaven, or the pains of hell : for fear and joy are naturally apt to appease this violence.

In contentions be always passive, never active, upon the defensive, not the assaulting part ; and then also give a gentle answer, receiving the furies and indiscretions of the other like a stone into a bed of moss and soft compliance ; and you shall find it sit down quietly : whereas anger and violence make the contention loud and long, and injurious to both parties.

If anger arises suddenly and violently, first restrain it with consideration, and then let it end in a hearty prayer for him that did the real or seeming injury. The former of the two stops its growth, and the latter quite kills it, and makes *amends* for its monstrous and involuntary birth.

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A prayer against wrath and inordinate anger.

1. O ALMIGHTY Judge of men and angels, whose anger is always the minister of justice, slow, but severe, not lightly arising, but falling heavily when it comes; give to Thy servant a meek and a gentle spirit, that I also may be slow to anger, and easy to mercy and forgiveness. Give me a wise and constant heart, that I may not be moved with every trifling mistake and inconsiderable accident in the conversation and intercourse of others, never be moved to an intemperate anger for any injury that is done or offered; let my anger ever be upon a just cause, measured with moderation and reason, expressed with charity and prudence, lasting but till it hath done some good, either upon myself or others.

2. Lord, let me be ever courteous and easy to be entreated; never let me fall into a peevish or contentious spirit, but follow peace with all men, offering forgiveness, inviting them by courtesies, ready to confess my own errors, apt to make amends, and desirous to be reconciled. Let no sickness or cross accident, no employment or weariness, make me angry or ungentle, and *discontent or unthankful*, or uneasy to them

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that minister to me ; but in all things make me like unto the holy Jesus. Give me the spirit of a Christian, charitable, humble, merciful, and meek, useful and liberal, complying with every chance ; angry at nothing but my own sins, and grieving for the sins of others ; that while my passion obeys my reason, and my reason is religious, and my religion is pure and undefiled, managed with humility and adorned with charity, I may escape Thy anger which I have deserved, and may dwell in Thy love, and be Thy son and servant for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

JEREMY TAYLOR.

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The Miracles of the Loaves.

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, 2 Sam. xxi. ; *Evening*, 2 Sam. xxiv.
EPISTLE, Rom. vi. 19. GOSPEL, St. Mark viii. 1.

A DOUBLE light often breaks from the same portion of Holy Scripture. For instance, the passage of the Red sea has two distinct lessons for those who read God's holy Word. In the first place, it was designed to shew the goodness and power of God in delivering those who trust in Him out of all their trouble. In the second place, as St. Paul tells us, it was also designed to prefigure the blessed Sacrament of Holy Baptism; Egypt the land of bondage representing our natural state, which is a state of captivity to sin; the actual passage of the waters representing the act of Baptism, whereby we are translated from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God; and the journey through the wilderness representing

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the Christian's pilgrimage through this life to the land of promise, the Jerusalem which is above, the heavenly and continuing city, the rest that remaineth for the people of God after this present dwelling in tents, and the godly labours of this wayfaring and pilgrim life.

Again, in our Saviour's first miracle in Cana of Galilee, many lessons in godliness may be discerned; first, our Lord's presence at such a time shews the holiness and religiousness of the ordinance and estate of matrimony, an estate designed to advance us in the spiritual and religious life; next, when He beautified and adorned by His presence that holy rite, doubtless He thereby teaches us to consider the spiritual unity which is betwixt Himself and His Church; for St. Paul, we may observe, scarcely ever speaks of marriage without reminding us that the Church is the Spouse of Christ. Thus, in speaking to the Ephesians, and to us through them, he says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; *but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

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So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh ; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church : for we are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery : but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

Again, the miracle itself is supposed to signify the passing on from Holy Baptism to the Lord's Supper ; first the water, then the wine ; just as the fountain that the spear opened in our Blessed Saviour's side when He hung upon the Cross, which gave forth blood and water, is supposed to signify the two Sacraments.

When we come to the miracle which we have read in the Gospel of the day, we are again able to perceive a two-fold meaning. First, there is the plainer and more obvious lesson, that if we hunger and thirst after righteousness and seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all things necessary for our bodily life will be added. The multitude, drawn from their houses by a fervent love for the divine and saving words of *Christ*, *thought not* how their bodily life was

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to be sustained; they were only mindful of heavenly things: but their faith had its recompense; in seeking the greater good they got the lesser also; in desiring not to be fed by bread alone but by every word which proceedeth from the mouth of God, they obtained bread for the supply of their wants. They were first fed by the heavenly teaching of their Lord, and their souls filled with the treasures of wisdom, the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth; then when that best repast was finished, and He had filled the hungry soul with goodness, He proceeded by a wonderful exercise of His power to prepare a table for them in the wilderness, to make bread for His people, and out of a few loaves to satisfy the hunger of four thousand, who "did eat and were filled; and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets."

But the miracle, besides encouraging us to seek heavenly before earthly things, has another meaning. Like the miracle at the marriage of Cana, it is supposed to represent the Lord's Supper. As in the one case wine was miraculously ministered to those who sat down at that feast, so here bread, the other element of the Sacrament, was miraculously multiplied for *the four thousand* who sat down.

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There is a wonderful similitude between our Lord's actions at this time, and when He first instituted the blessed Sacrament of His body and blood. In this instance we read that "He took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to His disciples to set before them." At His last supper we read, "as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to His disciples." The miraculous increase of the bread is supposed to shew the wonderful increase of His Church. However many are brought unto the fold of faith, for them there will be bread enough and to spare. There were but twelve disciples at our Lord's supper, think at this moment what multitudes throughout the world receive the bread and wine according to His command. See how the bread has as it were gone on being multiplied, to meet the spiritual wants of this increasing multitude of believers. If all the heathen should be converted to the faith, for them the table would be spread, and the bread ministered.

But may not this great miracle remind us also, and with great fitness at this present time, of the wonderfulness of God's ordinary providence in supplying us with bread? Though we may a *thousand times* walk through the fields

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and see the corn grow, and because it is a common and customary thing, take no account of the wonders that are at work in our fields, still it is good for us to be reminded as well of the power as of the goodness of God. Is there not every year a sort of miraculous increase of bread? If it were a wonderful thing that seven loaves should feed so many, just consider in an ordinary year what a multitude could be fed by the produce of that quantity of corn which it would take to make seven loaves. Suppose, instead of making it into bread, we were to take as much corn, as many grains as would be required to make seven loaves, and to sow that grain, and suppose the grain sown were to produce an ordinary crop, then consider how vast the increase would be upon the original grains. Take a single ear of corn, is not that a miracle before our eyes? See what has come by God's creative power out of but one grain, how has it been multiplied! Count the grains on a single ear, you will find it sixty or seventy-fold, one seed being thus wonderfully increased unto sixty or seventy seed by the operation of the finger of God. Thus, though our Lord's miracle was sudden, and in respect of its suddenness was a most marvellous instance of His

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divine power, and had in other respects many most marvellous circumstances, yet if we take the ordinary growth and increase of the corn in our fields, we behold every year the most mighty and the most merciful working of His power.

Thus too we see that God by so mightily increasing the seed from the mere remnant of the past, from the fragments that are left after we have eaten and been filled, raises the store of the future year, and thus year by year instead of half, or a quarter of our provisions being required for seed only, a fiftieth or a sixtieth portion only needs to be kept. Behold then in these things the power and the goodness of the Lord. If He thus deals with us in earthly things, and thus gives increase to our earthly labours, shall we not with a true faith labour for the meat that perisheth? The incorruptible harvest, the bread from heaven will be bestowed upon us in like abundance if we faint not.

It is true that at times God deals out a lesser measure of His gifts; either He lessens the increase of the seed sown, or He destroys some other fruit of the earth. These visitations we may rightly regard as chastenings and punishments for our sins, as calls to repentance, as voices *from heaven itself* to warn us of the judg-

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ment to come, as signs of the wrath of God, as tokens that we have not walked worthy of our vocation, that sin is abounding among us, and love waxing cold, and faith drooping, and the thorns of unrighteousness springing up to darken the earth. Such a visitation we have had in past years ; we have suffered punishment. But now, thanks be to God, we may look out upon our fields and be glad ; we may now see happy days. God gives us occasion to hope ; our fields stand thick with corn, the valleys laugh with corn ; God's most gracious and most powerful hand has again touched the earth, and blessed it, and lo, it is a fruitful field ; He has spoken the word, and the seed obeying His word is multiplied before our eyes. All around us are cheering signs of the renewed fertility of the earth ; the light of God's countenance seems again returned ; His love is breaking out in the prospect of increased fertility ; He is preparing food for our large multitudes that we may not be sent empty away. For many months has the power of God been secretly at work beneath the earth ; now His secret mercy openly appears. He has been secretly blessing the seed that in due time it might bear abundantly. He was quickening the *dead and hidden grain* that it might have its re-

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surrection from its earthly grave to our comfort. Though in some past years His hand has been heavy upon us, and we went through hard times, He is now giving a fruitful year; the season of punishment has not lasted long; His mercy has not been laid aside; He is preparing for us gladness of heart.

See then the graciousness of God; how loving is He in His dealings with the children of men, how full of compassion, as of old, and of great pity.

But while we see God's love, and remember past punishments, while we behold our fields covered again with a goodly store, are we not to see what our part is as children of God? Are we not to turn to ourselves and measure our growth and increase in spiritual things, that we may know whether all this while we are growing in heavenly things, making increase, waxing strong in faith and ripening towards an abundant harvest of good works? Are our very fields to condemn us? Are we to see them fruitful and feel ourselves barren? Do the earth and the seed obey God, and bear fruit abundantly, and do we disobey the Spirit of grace, and bear nothing, and stand still, and present to our Saviour's eye *nothing but cold, unfruitful, sinful hearts?* Has

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God renewed the face of the earth, and is every thing gushing forth into a new and more vigorous life, and have we refused to be renewed, even with the renewings of the Holy Ghost, and hated to be reformed? Is every thing full of life, every thing growing and ripening except ourselves? These are the questions which the very earth seems to put, which the very fields seem to ask as we pass through the high waving corn.

It were a sad thing if the spiritual world alone stood still, while the natural world advanced; it were sad if sin reigned among us, though we have been called by the blessed Jesus our Saviour from sin to holiness, to fruitfulness in good works; it were sad if the earth at God's bidding were to offer us so rich a store, and we who gather it were without thankfulness to God, without thought of Him, without obedience to the Gospel laws. All this time we should have been growing like the seed in a heavenly growth; all this time we should have been quickened and raised up from sin; we should have been becoming a more godly people, for the quickening Spirit has been amongst us to stir our souls. I pray you to make haste and prolong not the time. Let not the whole *earth cry out* against you any more, but so obey

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the motions of the Spirit that together with the increase of the fruits of the earth, there may be an increase of the fruits of the Spirit throughout the whole Church of Christ to the glory of God.

GRACE.

My stock lies dead, and no increase
Doth my dull husbandry improve :
O let Thy graces without cease
Drop from above !

If still the Sun should hide his face,
Thy house would but a dungeon prove,
Thy works night's captives ; O let grace
Drop from above !

The dew doth every morning fall ;
And shall the dew outstrip Thy Dove ?
The dew, for which grass cannot call,
Drop from above.

Death is still working like a mole,
And digs my grave at each remove :
Let grace work too, and on my soul
Drop from above.

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Sin is still hammering my heart
Unto a hardness, void of love :
Let suppling grace, to cross his art,
Drop from above.

O come ! for Thou dost know the way,
Or if to me Thou wilt not move,
Remove me where I need not say—
Drop from above.

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The Widow of Sarepta.

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, 1 Kings xlii. ; *Evening*, 1 Kings xvii.
EPISTLE, Rom. viii. 12. GOSPEL, St. Matt. vii. 15.

THE Sundays after Trinity represent the Christian's course from Baptism to the grave ; they point out to him his duty from the time when he rose again with Christ, and received His Holy Spirit, until the hour when at midnight the cry will sound forth, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him," and he is called up to behold the awful and solemn advent of the King of glory. With a view then of making our way plain before our eyes, the Church for many Sundays selects striking instances of virtue and vice, putting them forth in marked contrast to each other, holding up some as our example and encouragement, and bringing forward others, as our warning lest our course and our end be like theirs. This is the case to-day ; compare these two chapters of the book of Kings, and we shall not be left in doubt as to which is the path that

God blesses, and what are the undertakings which He in His anger brings to confusion.

In this morning's lesson all is grand, public, imposing, exciting; the king of the nation comes in state with officers and priests to dedicate a new altar to his God, and after the sacrifice there is a feast; but these solemn services were offered up in rivalry to the God of heaven, and he who sat down to eat bread, ate it in rebellion to the Lord who sent him; and Jeroboam's hand was dried up, and the altar was rent by a miraculous power, and the prophet who disobeyed his Master rose up from the place of his disobedience to die a violent and terrible death; leaving us a record, that God's arm is against the irreverent man, that separation from the Church only ends in disorder and loss of faith, and that they who minister before God, and bear His message, and speak in His name, must indeed tremble lest their works belie their words, lest with the language of truth on their lips, they should have the love of the world in their hearts and be without self-denial in their lives.

This evening the picture is reversed; the excitement, the display, the pomp, is over, the feast is past and done, a desolating famine spreads *throughout* the land, and out of these scenes of

row, suffering, and despair, which attend every general visitation of God's anger, there appears a tale of humble domestic life; there comes forth a poor widow to tell us, that he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and that whoever shall give unto one of God's little ones a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

What was there then in this widow that has gained for her a place in God's Word and in His favour for ever? Why is she selected to receive and entertain the prophet of the Lord? Why when the heaven was shut up for three years and six months, and when great famine was throughout the land, though there were many towns in Israel, unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow? The simple account which Scripture gives will supply a ready answer to these questions. The famine, it would seem, was drawn down by Elijah's prayers, "he prayed earnestly that it might not rain;" knowing that the wickedness and idolatry of Israel must call down some terrible judgment from their offended God, he prayed that a lighter punishment might be sent to work a reformation in the land. In

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answer to his prayers, God shut up the windows of heaven and there was a great drought. When God visits a nation all alike suffer, high and low, sinner and saint feel the strokes of His rod: Elijah himself, the cause of the infliction, is made to feel its severity; he who called on God to stop the supplies of His people comes himself to lack food. But though tried, "the righteous is never forsaken," and though Elijah was an out-cast and obliged apparently to fly for his life, God interposed by a miracle to satisfy his wants; "the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening: and he drank of the brook;" and when the brook dried up God provided another refuge for His faithful servant, He bade him leave the land of Israel now lying under God's anger, and go to the coasts of the Gentiles; when he came to the gate of the city of Sarepta, he saw a common ordinary sight, he met a poor woman gathering sticks; the prophet, hungry, thirsty, and exhausted, asks for a little water to drink, and as the widow was going readily and cheerfully to fetch it, Elijah opens to her his other wants, "bring me I pray thee a morsel of bread in thine hand;" her answer shews that the famine *sent as a punishment on Israel had extended also*

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other lands, and that she had nothing to look forward to for herself and her child but to pine away and die : “ As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse : and behold, I am gathering seven sticks, that I may go in, and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.” Elijah here puts her generosity to a hard trial, he asks for even a portion of this last mouthful, he asks her before she herself ate or let her child eat, to give him a part of her staff of life : “ fear not ; go, and do as thou hast said : but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.” No doubt with the request he made a most acceptable promise, “ the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the use of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth ;” nevertheless, it was as a probing test to her faith, on the word and on the promise of a stranger and in the hope of future increase of her store, to give away part of her slender provision, to give it away at a time when there was a famine in the land, and there was no prospect of getting more food when that she had was gone.

But hers was a generous heart, and a willing spirit, *the fittest and best soil whereon noble*

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energetic faith can grow, so that when the trial came and the appeal was made, she was not found wanting; "she did not confer with flesh and blood," there was something within which made her pity the prophet's necessities and urged her to comply with his request, "she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house did eat many days." It was a bold venture, a generous act of self-denying faith, it was going out not knowing whither she went; but it was worth the trial, she did not go unrewarded; she gave up what she most stood in need of at the time, and in the end gained what she most wanted; she used hospitality under the most difficult circumstances, but she entertained one who brought a blessing upon her and all that she had. The prophet by the power of God restored her child to life, "and the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which He spake by Elijah."

We are told little else about this poor widow, and are left uncertain what her previous life had been, and whether she had been a faithful worshipper of the true God. Most probably she had not, most probably she had led a bad life; her *remonstrance* with the prophet about "calling her

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sin to remembrance" seems to allude to a period of past ungodliness and disobedience, and it was only by a succession of miracles that she was brought to acknowledge that Elijah was a true prophet and his master the true God; "now by this" (when he had raised her son from the dead) "I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth, is truth."

But this only renders her example more instructive to us, and shews, what it is most important for all to observe, that one generous self-denying act is often the first step toward a far different and more devoted life. An opportunity of doing some work of faith is put before us, Christ's authorised messenger invites us to some difficult self-forgetting deed, and it may be for the first time in his life a man follows the invitation; it is but one act perhaps, and is soon over, but it forms the beginning of a new line of thought and a fresh course of action. It is too the commencement of a continual stream of God's mercy and grace, which flowing into an honest and true heart, goes on ever increasing; the barrel of meal does not waste, or the cruse of oil fail; so that the ever-returning mercies and blessings of perhaps a whole life not unfrequently take *their spring from some season in days long*

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past by, when the Spirit of God prompted us to one noble generous undertaking, and by a strong exercise of the will we listened and obeyed the call. But this is only an addition to the lesson which the widow brings home to us, the two points which her history most plainly enforces are the blessedness and the reward of true generosity.

1. In what does this virtue really consist? we must speak very plainly, for this is a subject on which there is much error, much trifling with the conscience, and persons are far too ready to cheat themselves into the belief that they are generous and open-hearted, and so to claim the exceeding rich rewards which Scripture promises to the merciful man. There are several ingredients in true liberality, ingredients that are necessary, and the presence of one of these requisites will not compensate or make up for the want of others. There can be no true generosity without self-denial; we must give of our necessity, that is, give up what we need ourselves, the want of which we shall ourselves feel. This is a hard condition; it takes away many names from the list of those who claim the name of liberal, it removes those who fare *well*, *who eat and drink to the full*, and wear rich

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apparel, and gratify every wish ; and then of their abundance, without any loss, any self-denial to themselves, clothe the naked and feed the hungry. But it is a blessed condition as well, it opens the rewards of charity to the poor and distressed themselves ; it shews that they who have scarce any thing of their own, and are in narrow circumstances, may “by giving of that little” obtain the promises equally with the rich and opulent, and because it is a greater sacrifice on their part may “cast in more than they all ;” it puts within reach of the needy the Apostle’s praise to the Corinthians, that “their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.”

There is no generous charity without faith in God’s word, it must spring from a real and divine motive. It is not enough to give out of mere good nature ; we all have more or less feelings within which prompt us to relieve the distressed and to pity the afflicted ; they are blessed feelings, and render it more easy for us to form the habit of true benevolence, but they are not more than the desires, which will if acted upon lead to the habit. It is not enough to give in order that we may have the satisfaction of knowing that our feelings are in a healthy state, and ready to *respond to any genuine object of pity*

that may present itself; though no doubt this is a reward of generosity, which we may not lightly disregard and which is very full of happiness. We must not give in display, or for any other worldly motive, liberality built on such a foundation as this can be of no avail, except to delude him who does so give. Faith must be the motive which should make us succour the distressed, aiding them because we are bid to aid them by an unseen Lord, and for the sake of an unseen recompense, giving up the present which we can see and can enjoy, in order that the future which we cannot see may be more full of blessing and plenty.

The poor widow had both these requisites, she had self-denial and faith, but as members of Christ united to Him, and with the spirit of adoption in our hearts, a more constraining motive is set before us; we may go among the sick, the poor, and the afflicted, in imitation of One who in our form went about doing good, and out of deep-seated love to that Saviour, who "though He was rich, yet for" our "sakes He became poor, that" we "through His poverty might be rich."

2. They who do thus give in self-denial and *out of their want* are not losers by the venture

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that they make ; our alms do not lessen but increase the store. But in saying this we may not take this promise in a worldly, carnal sense, we must not expect that the return will always come in this world. We must remember what we are ; we are God's children, not under the law with its temporal sanctions, but under the Gospel with its unseen privileges and promises ; called upon to deny ourselves and follow Christ, not for any thing that this life has got to offer, but that we may lay up treasure in heaven, and in remembrance of our Saviour's declaration, " Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me ;" so that though God will provide all needful things for those who love Him, yet we must not look for Him to make up in kind the loss which our charity has brought upon us. But this need not keep us back from self-denying generosity ; it is a greater call to it, for God will make up our loss by a supply of what is of far more importance than any earthly gain, He will make the return in spiritual gifts, which like the meal and the oil, never fail, never waste away. We may go on through life in straitened circumstances, because we have given freely of our substance, because *we feel the loss* of what we have parted

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with, but God will reward us even here by a peace of mind which, because He gives it, passeth all understanding; He will shed abroad in the heart a feeling of firm and loving reliance on His goodness, which will enable a man to see God's hand in the various changes and chances of this mortal life, and to praise Him in all. And He will fulfil us with His grace and heavenly benediction, giving us the assurance that we are following in the footsteps of our Blessed Redeemer, and pursuing a course which is indeed acceptable to Him; and this heavenly peace, and reliance, and presence will not fall away with time, it is a store which will even go on increasing, the barrel of meal will not waste, or the curse of oil fail.

In conclusion I would but say that adverse circumstances, and scenes of sorrow and distress especially call out the sympathies of the heart. Englishmen may require a strong inducement to lead them to generous self-denying faith, but when their deep and honest feelings are thoroughly awakened, they are not, we may say with humility, behind other nations in the race of godliness. Last year witnessed a sad scene in our highly-favoured country, a terrible disease stalked throughout it, spreading death and

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dismay, and "making many homes desolate." Wherever the plague came not, it was hard to make persons believe the calamities which other spots were suffering, but wherever it extended its ravages, a spirit was called forth in our Church, which, were there no other proof, would shew that the presence and favour of God indeed abide in her. Men of ease and pleasure devoted themselves to the care of the sufferers; persons of high office and station humbled themselves to the lowest ministrations; delicate and refined women were daily and nightly found in the loathsome hospitals of the sick; freely did all give of their substance; the last shilling, the last sovereign were often given to relieve the widows and orphans of those who had been so rapidly hurried to the grave; and many were frightened from their sins, and numbers who had lived almost without God in their thoughts, now daily pressed into the sanctuary of the Lord, and when the day of humiliation was kept, it was kept with solemnity and earnestness; in one large town where the cholera literally "slew its thousands," business was suspended entirely, even the houses of entertainment were closed and barred up throughout the whole day. *God's visitation seemed to work a reformation,*

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and deeds of charity, self-sacrifice and generous faith, were called forth on every side. Blessed be God the judgment passed away, never, we may earnestly pray, to visit our shores again; far better however that it come year by year in increasing violence, than that the effects of it on our hearts should pass away with the day of trouble; far better live always in anxiety and suspense, scarcely knowing whether we shall escape from one hour to another from "the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the sickness that destroyeth in the noon day," than that when the plague is past, our hearts should be closed up and our efforts relax, and that we should return to the ways of indifference and sloth. The trial then is not so much that we should act generously in the midst of danger and distress, as that when the peril is over, we should fail to do from gratitude and thankfulness what we once undertook out of fear and compassion. When we are recovered from the snares of death, when we have been delivered from a terrible visitation, when we are each one of us living memorials of God's mercy and goodness, then comes the trial. Last year God invited to devoted labours of generosity and love *by the judgments* which He sent, and the dangers

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Oh He brought near our dwellings; this year, be, He bids us do the same from far different motives, placing us in the midst of health, ease, plenty, and comfort. Let it not be said we can only act aright when calamity urges us onwards, that, though in times of affliction we are ready to follow the poor widow's example, and part with what it seems difficult to replace, we are not willing to aid Christ's poor and His little ones, when our hearts should be full of thankfulness at God's goodness and paternal care.

Why, we may plainly ask, are deeds of charity and ministrations to the sick and needy confined almost the most part to the weaker sex? why is there not a little party of laymen in every large parish, who both in the higher and humbler ranks devote a short time in each day to offices of kindness and a personal visitation of those ever-recurring cases of mourning and distress, which in order that our faith and liberality may be exercised, will never depart out of the land? This is a serious question, enough I trust to make us at least who read these pages seek to make ourselves more intimately acquainted with the realities of want and affliction which are perhaps at their very doors, enough to make them do

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something more than they hitherto have done towards relieving the festering masses of destitution and ignorance which exist in our large towns. But let them do it in faith, for the sake of God ; in self-denial, giving what they themselves want ; from love, because Christ loved them, in order that following the widow's example they may receive more than the widow's reward.

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Temptation.

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, 1 Kings xviii. ; *Evening*, 1 Kings xix.

EPISTLE, 1 Cor. x. 1. GOSPEL, St. Luke xvi. 1.

CHRISTIAN reader ! is there a time when you are tempted in a way you think you cannot resist ? Is there any one evil habit you continue to practise, any forbidden action you seem sure to repeat, of which you reason in your heart that it is hopeless or needless for you to try and avoid it ? You know much of what is said in God's Holy Word of evil doings, you know of many who are free from the sin you desire to commit, yet do you ever, do you not often seem to feel that you are tempted above that which, although a Christian, you are able to bear ? If it be so, suffer me to impress upon you with earnestness the view of your case that is found in the Epistle for this day.

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The following passage will serve to unmask every act of sin that pretends to so much bias in its favour as to cancel its guilt. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." To this I desire to add the plain words of St. James; "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." Now these words, taken in a general sense, contain clear and simple truths which appear to be in practice forgotten or denied. They tell us that not only is God too faithful to tempt us Himself, but that in all cases He does for His part put a limit upon temptation, within which we are able by His grace to bear it. Again they tell us that, tempted or tried as we may be, there is a reward, even a crown of life, reserved for such as endure their trial without for-

ing the path of duty which the Lord Jesus marked out; and they remind us of a fact which to good Christians would never need to be repeated. They tell us that in no case is temptation produced by "circumstances," as we are called; but that it always depends on the state of our souls, the inward battle of our flesh and spirit.

In considering the warning of St. James, "Let man say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted of God,'" we have chiefly to do with that class of persons to whom we may suppose that St. Paul and St. James intended their words especially to apply, and they are very numerous. They each cast a veil over the agency of almighty God, which varies in colour according to the hue of their several characters, but the effect they have in doing so is in all cases the same. They wish to throw the burden of misdeeds for which they are in themselves responsible upon the general or special appointments of divine providence, and so they hope to lessen the contrast of their own offences.

It is well to consider some of the ways in which men seek to misrepresent the stamp of goodness impressed upon all God's creatures. *As it is very common to find the world*

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charged with the sins we commit whilst we remain in it, as though within its mystic circle every thing perforce changed its character. It is at least implied that what is written in God's Holy Word with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond, and is graven upon the table of our hearts as sin, becomes in the world changed into some form of good, or at least remains only so far evil as to be easily pardonable by our great Judge at the last day. It is not so. The world has no fresh revelation of eternal truth to set over against the unalterable rules of God's written word. It is not merely false, but it is impious, to assert that the religion of the Bible is at variance not only with what is, but with what must needs be, the practice of the world in which we live. The law of God must ever be good and true, but it is not necessary that all that is in the world should be, so much as it is, "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." What inspiration has told us of the world we know of it by experience, but we are not told, and as Christians we dare not, make the world an excuse for tampering with the laws sent from heaven to regulate it.

Another way of evading the plain assertion *that* "God tempteth no man," by accusing the

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passions and appetites of our nature, is so far plausible and dangerous as to require careful examination. For it is, openly by some and secretly by many others, relied upon as an excuse for some kinds of sin, that, finding in our bodily constitutions certain cravings for special objects, we are not responsible for the lengths to which we may be led in following out those objects. It is implied that since God gave us the passions we feel, it would be contrary to our notions of His justice if He were to punish us for seeking to gratify them. It is obvious that such a course of reasoning would subvert all religion, if it were justified by the facts of the case. It would leave us free to think, that health and strength remove the Christian from the guilt of deeds such as even a heathen abhors. It would oblige us to speak of offenders against God, in the same terms as though we lived altogether without Him in the world. Instead of censuring, it would have us rather approve of any extreme, which however condemned in Scripture, men yet feel inclined to commit. But away with so false a gloss upon the facts of God's handiwork, so gross a libel upon His good providence. It would be to say, that because God made the *stocks and stones* of which the heathen forms

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his idols, that therefore they are, when fashioned into graven images, fulfilling the object of their creation. It would be to say, that because God made the elements, therefore they are fulfilling their proper object when for any cause they destroy any thing they reach. And so in all matters we should be led to the same faulty conclusion. We do not argue so loosely in other cases; we do not pretend to judge of a man by the features nature has given him, but by the expression we think his habits of thought and action have given to those features from time to time in his life. God made indeed our features, but there is something distinct from themselves that gives them the light and shade of character, just as God made indeed our passions, but there is something distinct from them that explains their improvement or their perversion. And so throughout what is called nature; God made the trees to be lofty and vigorous, yet for some cause many are stunted and weakly. God made the flowers to be lovely and sweet, but there is a cause why so few come to perfection, so many are scentless and drooping. Only let the analogy of the creation in general be marked and applied in some sense to our own cases, and then surely we shall pause before we

hat we are tempted of nature, that is, of
 in our passions and appetites as He gave
 to us. There is a pleasure assigned by
 Creator more or less to every passion and
 site in our system, and it is given us to
 1 and endear the performance of things
 sary to our state in earth. It may be suf-

to absorb our desires into itself, so as to
 us a distaste for the many great objects of
 reation with which only it is rightly associ-
 and it may, as very commonly it does,
 en our scruples about offending God. But

all to say before God, that He tempts us
 igh the pleasures He assigns to our passions,
 rely to revile Him for having given us that
 ure at all, instead of obliging us to work
 His general laws with pain or indifference.

her ways there are of asserting that men
 tempted above that they are able to bear,
 hey are not quite so common or so danger-

The most specious is perhaps that of as-
 ng a bad or defective early training, or an
 ing example, as the irresistible cause of
 eeding misdeeds. Let us grant this rea-
 ng to apply to a time of heedless error, yet
 ainly avails not as an excuse in prospect to
man that can frame it, because the light that

has burst upon him shews him plainly en-
 the rule he ought forthwith to follow.
 reward for doing so may possibly be the gre-
 but his duty to do well in future can
 be the less for having discovered why he
 done ill in time past. And to argue from
 ward circumstances of wealth or poverty,
 a godless life is consistent with the hope
 Christian, is worse than trifling with the g-
 reason. Wealth may be coveted, but no
 can prove that its true use is to surfeit its o-
 with luxury ; poverty may be lamented, bu-
 see not why it makes men less Christians
 cause it leaves them less affluent. On the w-
 then, we may easily see what a mistake is
 mitted by such as lose sight of God's word,
 under the pretext of the world in genera-
 their own passions in particular, their educ-
 or their circumstances, suffer themselves to t-
 that they are tempted above that they are
 to bear.

But we need not rest contented with kno-
 that temptation is not what it is commonly
 to be, for we are told plainly what it reall-
 "Every man," saith the Scripture, "is tem-
 when he is drawn away of his own lust
enticed." And this applies, not to our pas-

as God our Maker gave them to us, but to the abuse of them which the evil spirit our tempter has caused in us. God is faithful, and He does not for His part draw us away from what is right. Satan is our adversary, and he does draw and entice us away from righteousness, as he "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." We may have the kingdom of God within us, or we may, alas! have the kingdom of Satan. When the throne of God is supreme in our hearts, it is attended by ministering spirits, that fill us with visions of light and holy things that are in themselves too bright for the scene of this our pilgrimage. "The pure in heart," it is said, "shall see God," where others are blind to His presence, and they are blessed for the glimpse they gain of the great Eternal. Not a feeling have they, however common to man, but by a true alchemy it converts the grosser matter of the earth into the pure gold of the sanctuary. Not a sense have they, but by an unerring chymistry it is ever busied in testing and detecting what is divine, and good, and innocent in all the confusion of a degenerate world. In a word, their whole spirit, and soul, and body, like the *digestive systems of plants and animals*, is ever ab-

sorbing readily what is fitted for its aliment, and dies rather than admit poison into its substance. And if such is in some sense the kingdom of God in the heart of the righteous, as it bears upon the objects of the world in which we live, let us consider on the other hand what is the nature of the kingdom of Satan in the unrighteous. Where the evil spirit is enthroned within the heart, he reigns not in the full blaze of his own hideous deformity, but amidst the beguiling graces of an angel of light. He holds out to us, as of old, the prize of knowledge and enjoyment of good and evil, and he gives the same false assurance to the tender conscience, "Ye shall not surely die." As the tempter himself is transformed before us, so are evil thoughts, those ministers of his that do his bidding, transformed also, till we accept their tidings as though they were the heavenly host of Bethlehem, and not as those "locusts upon the earth," unto whom was "given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power," to hurt those "which have not the seal of God in their foreheads." It is where they prevail that so many "that have eyes see not" any thing that is lovely, so many "that have ears hear not" any *thing that edifies*. Those evil thoughts colour

every thing that is bad with their own unholy lustre, they quicken the pulse, they fire the brain, they lurk about every nerve, till conscience-stricken or reckless, the whole man comes to be drawn away and enticed by temptation. Let us then beware of saying that God tempts us outwardly, until we can shew that the outlets of our own systems are not infected by the evil spirit; let us never think that God tempts us inwardly, until we can disprove the fact, that Satan has warped our passions from their better purpose.

But it is a different thing to admit the true nature of temptation, and to decide whether we are, or are not responsible for its influence over us. The point is decided for us in a few words of St. James, "Submit yourselves therefore to God; resist the devil, and he will flee from you." And what he has said is confirmed by many ensamples in Holy Scripture, that are "written for our admonition on whom the ends of the world are come." We read of some men being overcome by temptation, but we read of others also for whom God found a way to escape that they might be able to bear it; we feel the sad effects of the temptation of the first Adam, but we know *too that on the spotless soul of the second*

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Adam, "the fiery darts of the wicked" were quenched as in a sea of living waters. It is hard to imagine that Cain was more tempted to murder Abel, than David was to lay hands on Saul, his relentless enemy, yet the one did and the other did not commit the crime. Esau bartered his birthright in the sight of God, as some of us may be tempted to do for some slight present satisfaction, some craving of the body or misgiving of the soul; but there have been saints of God at Jerusalem, at Babylon, at Rome, and who every where and always have 'endured hardness' in this present time as good soldiers of Christ, rather than sever one link that bound them to the throne of the heavenly grace. We know the end of Pharaoh and his host, their self-will and their destruction, but then we find that even wicked men, like Ahab, were sometimes found to humble themselves, and that then the Lord did not bring the evil upon them. We read of Korah and of Saul intruding on the priestly office, but surely they had no such claims to the highest place in the ministry as the seven deacons, and yet these remained consistently subordinate to the Apostles. Sometimes we find the saints of God forgetting *what spirit they were of*; we see it in Moses at Meri-

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bah, in David when he numbered the people, in Hezekiah when he displayed his treasures to the Babylonian. But it was not so with the holy Apostles, even when miracles were commonly wrought by their hands. Again, Balaam was tempted by the rewards of divination, Achan by the accursed thing of Jericho, Saul by the spoil of the Amalekites, Ahab by the field of Naboth, Gehazi by the Syrian's offer, and Judas by the reward of the innocent blood, but why are we bound to follow them, rather than the thousands that from the beginning have sold their goods for Christ's sake, and parted them among all men as every man had need? It is true that David was tempted into committing adultery, yet Joseph preserved his chastity. And so while Ahab hated Micaiah because he prophesied not good of him but evil, we know too that there has ever been a communion of saints that have loved the scourge of truth, whereby they have been chastised into godliness. And it has ever been the same; some, and it may be feared the greater number of men have fallen, but others have stood firm, under what appear to us to be the like temptations of a positive kind. And so in cases of a negative kind, when the *temptation is to leave undone what God com-*

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mands. For instance, a parent's love must have tempted Abraham as much to spare his son, as it did Eli to spare his guilty offspring, yet the patriarch took the knife to slay Isaac, while the high priest "restrained not" his sons. In like manner Job when he was tried retained his faith, while Israel under Moses did but fall away and even tempt God rebelliously. Therefore temptation does not in Scripture appear to be irresistible.

Finally, the lives of our friends furnish the same kind of evidence. Wealth, and food, and raiment, and bodily vigour, are not always made to subserve to dissipation, intemperance, vanity and sensuality. Self-denial and holiness are not proved on all hands to be purely visionary. Resignation does sometimes throw a fragrance round the severest bodily afflictions. Some are found to take the world at its true value, and to feel the sting of death so far removed from the terror of their last moments, that they can fall asleep in Christ without indifference and without despair. Thus we know that things which we say we are unable to resist, are avoided, and easily too, by others of our acquaintance.

The secret of the difference between us all is *that we are not equally able to say with the*

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Apostle, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." It is in Him that is "the way, the truth, and the life," that is found the ready way to escape temptation, which God is faithful enough to make that we may be able to bear it. Yea! though a wish to sin burn like the fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar around us, yet if the Son of God be with us, it "has no power" over us. When the forbidden fruit was first touched it was tasted, but now, by God's blessing, it may be handled without transgressing; and though sin be coiled round us as the viper fastened on the hand of St. Paul at Melita, we may like him shake it off at our pleasure. Above all, angels are ever ready to weave our trials when they are overcome into the crown of life that awaits us when all is over. Emmanuel foresaw our dangers, when He said to His first disciples, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." He knew the perils of that one hour of fancied safety in the garden, and he would fain warn us all of the rashness of relaxing ever so little in our allegiance to Him, or our self-denial in ourselves. He has taught us how to pray ever to our Father which is in heaven against the evil of temptation, and He would have no false reasoning of our own, *no example of our dearest friend*, induce

us to commit sin, as though it was but a harmless and guiltless indulgence. The thoughts of the pure in heart are cleansed by the inspiration of the eternal Spirit, so that to them, but only to them, are all things pure. That Spirit is given plenteously to all that seek Him humbly. He is not given more to the learned than to the unlearned, not more to the great man of the world than to the craftsman and labourer; His dwelling within us ends not with the state of things here around us; He is sent to us now in mercy, and He will guide us to God's presence in eternity.

Acts for the Christian Seasons.

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Jerusalem and her Children.

LESSONS: *Morning*, 1st. 1 Kings xxi. ; 2nd. Acts ii. ; *Evening*, 1st. 1 Kings ii. ; 2nd. Heb. vii. EPISTLE, 1 Cor. xii. 1. GOSPEL, St. Luke xix. 41.

So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations ; and from David to the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations ; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.” In short an epitaph over centuries of events interesting enough to outweigh the history of the whole world besides ! It sounds like the date of birth and of death, which the humblest of ourselves may expect to have recorded over us.

The birthday of Jerusalem was when Abraham drew the knife to slay his son on Mount Moriah, her death was virtually sealed when Christ, the atoning Lamb of God, wept over her appalling desolation. “When He was come, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at this thy day, the things that belong

unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes." Again He saith elsewhere, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate."

It is hard to conceive any thing more solemn and affecting than the lament of Jesus over the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They had eyes, yet they saw not the signs of His coming; they had room enough, yet they gave Him not where to lay His head; still He wept when the things that belonged unto their peace were hidden from their eyes, and their house was about to be left unto them desolate: "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" but He did more, for He wept in pity over the scene of His approaching sacrifice, and over them that would bring His blood upon them. He wept over Jerusalem as being already dead, since she had ceased to live to any good purpose, but it was not merely over her appointed fate. The temple and all the mystic charm that hung round the *holy hill* of Zion had ceased from its office when

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rd Himself had come to His house. It
perseded, and Emmanuel would not have
o think of the sure testimony to the holy
His Church would derive from the speedy
ent of His own prophecy concerning it.

He wept over the towers and palaces of
y, it was because they were interwoven
e history of a people that had not merely
ed the hostility of man, but thwarted the
oodness of God towards them.

career of that people, and the fortunes of
oly city, had been on a scale of ages, much
e lives many of us may be leading on a
f years, before we come to that point of
ie when the past is irrevocable and the
appalling. In reviewing some of the
of their history, we shall see to some
why Jesus might have wept over them
ly, and we shall see too how far the
of their course applies even to ourselves.

salem became to Israel very much what
urch of our land is to its members. In
m God was pleased to receive the chosen
into the covenant of circumcision, and in
stic sacrifice of Isaac on Mount Moriah
sen place for their worship was revealed.

o in Christ the Church Catholic was re-

ceived into the covenant of holy Baptism, while the accepted place of their worship was revealed to be, not at Jerusalem, but wherever they should worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Thus were the covenants given, and with them an intimation of the places where those who performed their parts in them should be favourably received. Then did the Salem of Melchizedek become Jerusalem in the tradition of the seed of Abraham, to shew their constant hope that within her walls "they should see peace," just as the Christian name we receive from the Church is given us to keep alive the hope that is implied in our Baptism. For the first few years of our lives we exist as it were in a state of patriarchal innocence, when our knowledge of religion is little more than we glean from the lips of godly parents. All is simplicity with us, and within the little outbreaks of childish feelings all our misdeeds are bounded. Then comes the removal from familiar scenes and faces to the rule of a stranger, and it may be a heartless and cruel one, and so we pass as it were into Egypt, into the house of bondage. We become engaged in labours very different from the light yoke of needful things to which we were subject before, we learn much *that is new*, much that is bad, but at length the

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time comes when, like Israel that had grown numerous enough to take its place amongst nations, we too become fitted to take our place amongst men.

Before we enter upon the struggle that is to gain us a share in what the world has to give, we do as Israel did at Sinai before entering upon the contest for their promised land. We approach the chief minister of the Church to be confirmed with God's blessing in performing our Christian duties, when we have learned them in a way that was not possible in our more tender years. To the solemn question of the bishop, whether we renew the promise and vow of our Baptism, we each audibly answer, "I do," and then it is that we stand in the place of the people to whom Moses "told all the words of the Lord and all the judgments, and they all answered with one voice, and said, 'All the words which the Lord hath said will we do.'" Being confirmed, we are on the one hand admitted to join in the highest mysteries of the Church in the holy Eucharist, as partakers of the sacrifice of Christ once offered for us; on the other hand we are plunged into the midst of the trials, the dangers, the toils, and the allurements of what is called "life." *It is well for us if some kind friend whom we*

respect can watch over us and guide us in the path of duty, but if left to ourselves, it is notorious how readily we fall away from our promises. In all this we do but resemble Israel in the next period of their history after receiving the law from Mount Sinai. On the one hand they stood before the altar and the ark of God, to join in the divine mysteries of the tabernacle, the beginning of services completed afterwards at Jerusalem. On the other hand they advanced to that fierce warfare that awaited them before entering upon the promised land. So long as they were led by Joshua and a few of his successors they served the Lord, but afterwards the record of them is but of their offences and their punishment, and the undeserved mercies of God towards them. They would not utterly destroy the Canaanites as they were commanded, any more than we will utterly renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, as we have promised. We think, as they did, that we can safely make terms where God has commanded none to be made. And the result is commonly the same with us as with them. The remnant of the Canaanites, with the weakness of Israel's faith in their favour, easily filled the chosen people with idolatry and vice of *all kinds, just as the few sinful habits we think*

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we may safely retain, acting upon the infection of our corrupt nature, are commonly found to bring us deeper and deeper into sin. Obedience to the law of Sinai would have made Israel a holy and happy people before God and the world; we should be holy and happy too, if, instead of reasoning so much upon the Gospel, we would obey so much of it as we know with certainty.

The first fourteen generations of Israel, a third of their whole existence as the chosen people, were drawing to a close, when they obtained their request of being made "like all the nations" in having a worldly king. God gave them a king, and not only so but in David he gave them a good king, in place of Saul the weak and misguided warrior whose appointment they had received with so much rapture. For a while the Lord's prophets stood in honour with king and people, and Jerusalem, the favoured spot of holiness, ceased to be any longer the "city of the stranger," it was seized and made ready for the ark of God. Then we read that David "went on and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him." His troubles in the common course of things were over, and it remained only to be seen whether the faults of himself or his successors would estrange them

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from the favour of Almighty God. It may be there is something like this in our own cases. With many of us about a third of our lives is spent in preparing for our several professions, trades and callings, and during that time we have to struggle, not only with the labours of our different occupations, but with the sins that do so easily beset us in our age of youth and inexperience. We offend and we suffer more or less, until we come at last to be as it were "like all the nations" in taking our place upon the world's great stage, and acting a part of importance according to our respective capacities. We no longer sin perhaps so much from the example of others, but we survive the follies of youth to be more serious, and shew more outward respect to God and His Church. And now is the time for us to go on like David and "grow great, and for the Lord of Hosts to be with us," that our light may so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven. Had it been so long together with those who worshipped towards the Holy of Holies, Jesus would not have been found weeping over their city. But He speaks of calls neglected, of warnings slighted, of peace unknown even in the city of peace, and

of salvation hopelessly hidden from their eyes. And such is the history their own writers have given of them.

The Temple rose in its own superb and mysterious grandeur, priest and Levite performed their duties in their courses, the wisdom of Solomon and his magnificence exceeded the bounds of admiration. But there was a canker in all this bloom of wisdom and greatness and show of religion. The soul of the people was warped from God by the abominations of the heathens with whom they consorted, and their trust in God's mighty arm for victory was exchanged for a trust in the chariots and horsemen which their money procured them from Egypt. They came to prefer each "grove and high place" to the holy hill of Zion, the law of Moses had scarcely a copy left to perpetuate it, and the vilest misdeeds marked for their own all but a remnant of the seed of Abraham. It was said but too justly to them, "According to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal." The prophets "rose up early" and rebuked the people, but in *vain*; *line upon line*, precept upon precept

were recorded against them by Jehovah, but without effect; a few good men were found amongst them, but they were only like the rocks of a mountain stream, which may divert but cannot repel the waters that flow down upon them.

Now let us take the case of men in general. We will suppose that in their more mature years they do honour the Church more openly, and stand before God in His House more regularly, yet an account must be given of the feelings under which this is done. The last day will unfold what are men's thoughts even while they utter their prayers, what care they take to come before God with guiltless hands and uncorrupt mind, how far in their outward worship of Almighty God they realize the testimony it brings against their daily practices. With the wisdom of manhood do men learn to be less sinful, or do they pervert increased means of doing good into fuller indulgence in what is bad? Do they, like Solomon, in the midst of their prosperity, reject the arm of the living God to trust in human means of strength and safety? If so, their course will be, like Jerusalem, from bad to worse. Self will be the "shameful thing" which they will idolize, "according to the number of *their cities*, and according to the number of

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treets" in which they live, move, and have being. The written Word of God will be aside, some good Josiah will be required to lead them of the religious exercises of their day, and in the main, their course will be one of hardened impenitence, until it shall please either to cut them off at once for their sins as He did the ten tribes, or to humble them by a heavy chastisement as He did the children of Israel.

Fourteen generations of youth from its infancy Abraham found the chosen nation grown into a prosperous kingdom under David at Jerusalem; fifteen generations more found them sitting by the waters of Babylon and weeping when they remembered Zion. No hand like David's reached to tune the harp in praise of Jehovah, could not "sing the Lord's song in a strange land." They had cared little for Zion when the Lord's house opened wide its gates to receive them, but now Zion was their only thought. The Hebrew exclaimed in agony, "If I forget O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning, yea! if I prefer not Jerusalem in my banishment." They had once preferred Baal to the Lord, but now, when they were humbled by His chastising hand, and the walls of Zion were lost

to them, they cherished the recollection of Jerusalem as the last spark remaining in the ashes of memory. Let us shift the scene to the sick bed, or the time of terrible disaster that compels the sinful man to look death or shame, or both, in the face. The "strange land" to him is that state of helpless disease or tribulation, that withdraws him from familiar scenes and company, that takes from him all the unworthy things he has so fondly worshipped, and leaves him to mourn over the decay of life, comfort, and reputation. He cannot give praise unto God after having so foully deserted Him, he will not give praise to his selfish and unchristian habits, for they have brought him into what he suffers. He has had sinful pleasures, but they leave no joy behind them; he has despised the Gospel, but now he cannot forget and dares not face it. He may well sit down and weep like the minstrels of Judah, unless a deliverance be sent in mercy to restore him.

And so we come to the last period of Jewish history, to the fourteen generations that had yet to pass before the Saviour should behold their fair city Jerusalem, and weep over her impending destruction. The Lord said of Cyrus, "*He is My shepherd and shall perform all My pleasure;*

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even saying to Jerusalem ‘Thou shalt be built ;’ and to the temple, ‘Thy foundations shall be laid.’ ” Under his permission and command the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem, to offer according to what was written in the law of Moses, the man of God. The temple rose again from the ruins to which the faults of its worshippers had reduced it ; there was great joy at its dedication, and the glory of the latter house was greater in prospect than of the former, because of the visitation of peace it should have in the promised Messiah. But alas ! the enthusiasm of building the holy temple vanished on the completion of it, the altars stood in its courts but the spirit of the worshippers was gone, the high-priesthood became more a worldly than a spiritual office, the people looked coldly upon the crimes of the successors of Aaron, they heeded not long together the heaven-wrought clemency of Alexander, or the irresistible prowess of the Maccabees. The nation was in its dotage in religion as in polity, and it grew weaker and weaker, more and more ready to be swallowed up as in a grave in the Gentile world of imperial Rome. The decline of our own latter years may perhaps be traced in *much the same way*. From some heavy chas-

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tisement of disease or other calamity, it may please God to restore us. We may have again those opportunities of doing good which we were sorry to have lost, which we longed to have restored to us, and which we said, as perhaps we felt, that we would never again neglect. But how long does the effect of our warning work in us? Does it make us true servants of God and of His Church ever afterwards? Do we not rather, like Judah, after a little thankfulness to Almighty God for His benefits, relapse again into ungodly habits. Undoubtedly we do full often. We have not in our old age the same sins as in youth and mature age, yet we have others that do most easily beset us. Especially we find a languor, a want of zeal and spiritual courage, brood over our souls if they have been long estranged from God, and it will seem that while we would not do what we could in our days of nerve and strength, we cannot do the things we would in our time of weakness and decay. And so, like Judah, we may be found to droop and droop, until the time comes for us to be cut off.

But the Gospel for the day reminds us of one chief feature in the history of the Jews and their holy city before its final overthrow. The *visitation of peace* in the Messiah had been promised

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nd had come to the house and people of the Lord. He and His holy angels were ready on the one hand to rejoice over every sinner that repented, just as on the other hand He wept over Jerusalem because she knew not the time of her visitation, neither would open her eyes to the things that belonged unto her peace. He wept because His last offer had been slighted. Oh ! may there be no such like cause for lament over us, for we have heard it said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." God may at the eleventh hour, if not before, send us some special visitation of peace, before we are cut off from the land of the living. He is "not willing that any should perish," and He for His part does all that can be done to reclaim His sinful creatures before they be finally lost to Him. Doubtless the proof of God and of His truth are set before us more or less plainly before we die, as clearly as the miracles of Emmanuel proved the divine nature of Himself and His Gospel in the last years of Jerusalem. And we may, like the penitent thief, accept salvation the last time it is offered, or we may, like the seed of Abraham in general, refuse to know or see the things that belong unto our peace, but if so, our house too, *like theirs*, will be left desolate.

And here let us pause in the parallel between

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the history of a people and what may prove the history of a single life. Let us not believe that we do in general make such havoc of our adoption in Christ Jesus as Israel did of the covenant God made with them. Let us hope that not many of us live on to be such warnings to others as the chosen nation has been to us. Let us trust that there are many who do not only know the law of the Gospel, but cleave to all its parts, many that not only have entered into the covenant of holy Baptism, but perform, as they best may, the vows they have made. The word of God may contain things of which we see not at once the meaning, the necessity, or the value, just as the book of Leviticus contains things which may have seemed needless and strange to wanderers in the wilderness. But we shall know more of these things as we grow in grace, and fulness of knowledge is reserved for us in the life to come.

Finally, as we should grieve over any thing we possessed that had been made precious and useful, but was become vile and hurtful, so, but much more, should we lament over our whole personal frame-work, bodily and spiritual, when it falls away from the grace of holy Baptism, until as a silver cord it be loosed, as a golden bowl it *be broken*, as the pitcher at the fountain, and the *wheel at the cistern*, it be crushed and disabled.

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When the dust of mortality returns to the earth as it was, it is sad to think of tears falling over the load of sin with which the spirit may return to God who gave it. Woe to the crown of pride whose glorious beauty is such a fading flower as this! "What could have been done more to My vineyard," saith the Lord, "that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Yea! what more could have been done for most of us that has not been done? Baptized, instructed, confirmed, partakers of the altar, guided in prayer, witnesses ever of God's goodness, reminded ever of His will, warned ever of His power, guarded by the simplest forms and matters of faith, stimulated by the highest and most saintly examples in good works, with all our social relations and much of our time sanctified by the Church; what could have been done more for us that has not been done? Oh, let us think of this and weep over our sins now, that we may not need to be wept over for our destruction in the end; let us pray that our spiritual dwelling may be with God in the blessedness of His immediate presence, and not, amidst the ruins of all we ever *held dear, left unto us desolate.*

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WHY doth my Saviour weep
At sight of Sion's bowers?
Shows it not fair from yonder steep,
Her gorgeous crown of towers?
Mark well His holy pains:
'Tis not in pride or scorn,
That Israel's King with sorrow stains
His own triumphal morn.

It is not that His soul
Is wandering sadly on,
In thought how soon at death's dark goal
Their course will all be run,
Who now are shouting round
Hosanna to their chief;
No thought like this in Him is found,
This were a Conqueror's grief.

Or doth He feel the Cross
Already in His heart,
The pain, the shame, the scorn, the loss?
Feel even His God depart?
No: though He knew full well
The grief that then shall be—
The grief that Angels cannot tell—
Our God in agony.

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It is not thus He mourns ;
Such might be Martyr's tears
When his last lingering look he turns
On human hopes and fears ;
But hero ne'er or saint
The secret load might know,
With which His spirit waxeth faint ;
His is a Saviour's woe.

" If thou hadst known, even thou,
" At least in this thy day,
" The message of thy peace ! but now
" 'Tis pass'd for aye away :
" Now foes shall trench thee round,
" And lay thee even with earth,
" And dash thy children to the ground,
" Thy glory and thy mirth."

And doth the Saviour weep
Over His people's sin,
Because we will not let Him keep
The souls He died to win ?
Ye hearts, that love the Lord,
If at this sight ye burn,
See that in thought, in deed, in word,
Ye hate what made Him mourn.

CHRISTIAN YEAR.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

PRAYER

FOR THE RIGHT USE OF OUR TALENTS.

O ALMIGHTY God, who hast given to us Thy servants many excellent gifts, which Thou hast taught us to employ to Thy glory, by ministering the same one to another ; give us grace, we humbly beseech Thee, to use them faithfully in the several stations to which Thou hast called us, that when the great day of account shall come, we may, each one, be able to make a good answer before the judgment-seat of Thy Son our Lord, and hear the blessed words which He shall then pronounce to all that have loved and served Him, " Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Grant this, O heavenly Father, for the sake of the same Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

lects for the Christian Seasons.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Great ends from all small instruments.

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, 2 Kings v. ; *Evening*, 2 Kings ix.

EPISTLE, 1 Cor. xv. 1. GOSPEL, St. Luke xviii. 9.

It is a very striking story which is brought before us in the morning lesson; that of Naaman the Syrian. Perhaps there are few narratives in the Old Testament more apt than this to win the attention and gain the interest of both old and young. The helpless condition of the little Syrian maiden; her loving zeal; the great work which God designed her; the pride, the anger, the submission of Naaman; the bold authority with which the prophet spoke in his Master's name; are all in their turn told in so touching a manner, and are drawn so exactly to the life, that we can almost fancy that we stand by the door of the house of Elisha, and hear the words of the prophet's messenger, and witness the rage which Naaman went his way.

We are told in the very fewest words (by this morning's lesson) that Naaman was "captain of

the host of the king of Syria," a "great man and honourable" in the eye of his master, because of the success which God had given to his arms; "he was a mighty man of valour," it is added, "but he was a leper." And here at the very first we may observe the way in which God is wont to dispense His gifts; how He mingles together in one man's lot the good and the bad; fortune and misfortune, as men are apt to speak; but as Christian men and Christian women are taught to believe, it is a varied cup of hidden blessings that He mingles; in which even the bitter turns to sweet, and "all things work together for good to them" at least "who love God." (Rom. viii. 28.) Thus, to speak even as men judge, it was the leprosy of Naaman, which at the time seemed so hard a trial, that brought him first to the prophet Elisha, and then to a knowledge of the God of Israel. For it so happened that the Syrians in some petty war had plundered a district of the land of Israel, and had brought away with them "a little maid," whom they had taken captive, "and she waited on Naaman's wife." This was not the result of mere chance; do not think so: in her captivity it was God's hand that was at work, overruling and guiding her, though unseen and unfelt by her. It would

seem that in the house of Naaman she had found the kind treatment of a home ; this at least, I think, is shewn by the concern which she felt in her master's leprosy. " Would God my lord were with the prophet that is at Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy !" These are not the words of an oppressed and degraded slave, but of a willing and affectionate servant. The words which fell, as by an accident, from her lips, were not forgotten ; one of Naaman's household repeated them in the presence of the king of Syria, and straightway the king sent Naaman with a letter to the king of Israel, in hope that so his favourite captain would find a cure. To the king of Israel Naaman came ; but he could do nothing. He only rent his clothes in anger, because he thought that his ancient enemy sought a quarrel against him. But the prophet Elisha, who dwelt near, learnt the object of the Syrian captain's visit, and called Naaman to wait upon him at his own house, " let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." The proud captain came to his door, with his horses and chariot ; but God's prophet came not out to meet him ; the servant of God must shew no homage to the pomp of heathen princes. But though he came

not out to Naaman in person, yet he sent his messenger instead, to bid him "go and wash in Jordan seven times," for so his "flesh should come again" to him, and he should "be clean." Vexed and wrath at the little honour that had been done him, the Syrian captain "turned and went away in a rage." He brooked ill the bidding of God's prophet; and was therefore not by the just reproof of his servants, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then when he saith unto thee, wash and be clean?"

Naaman, I say, was wroth; and it was thus that his servants rebuked him. They too were doubtless led by a higher power than they knew of, thus to address their master. For a mighty miracle was about to be worked upon him, if he could but have the faith to use God's appointed means: but he knew not that if he would enjoy the blessing he must tarry the Lord's leisure, and "wait upon" Him, until in His own good season He should bless a humble stream with healing powers, and so rid His servant of the leprosy. He found that the mighty cure was not about to be worked so readily as he had thought. God's prophet would not wait his pleasure, captain though he was of all the hosts of Syria. Would

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he see great things? then first he must stoop low. Would he receive a mighty blessing? then must he first learn to bend down his proud heart, and submit himself to the sentence of Elisha. "Behold, I thought," said Naaman, "he will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper." Such were his words; such his rage; and yet when his servants gently reprove him, we find that he delayed no longer; "He went down and dipped himself seven times in Jordan," "and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

Now among a very great number of lessons which the Holy Word of God would seem to bring before us in this story of Naaman, there are two which stand most clearly forth from the rest. We are told by an Apostle that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." (1 Cor. i. 27, 28.) Now, it is true, these words were *spoken* mainly of those eleven "*igno-*

rant and unlearned men," the humble fishermen of Galilee, through whose preaching and teaching the world became Christian; and yet they may well find a place in the story of Naaman the Syrian. They are equally true here. Judging as a man would judge, who, I ask, was less likely than this little captive maiden to become in the hands of God an instrument of such great things? and yet who, under God, was the first cause of bringing the Syrian captain to a knowledge of the one true God of Israel? It was not the king; it was not any great or wise man; no philosopher nor sage; but it was a "little maid" whom the Syrians had brought away captive out of the land of Israel. She had been early taught to love and to serve her God; she did not forget Him in her captivity; she did not cease to "sing the Lord's song in a strange land." When she left her home and all its sacred ties, she carried with her doubtless a deep love for her country, but a far deeper love for her God, who, as she well knew, would never leave her nor forsake her. She was content to do His work, even in the family of Naaman the Syrian. And God rewarded her faith; for He enabled her to become the blessed instrument of turning a soul, even the soul of her master, from darkness to light, from

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the worship of false gods to at least a knowledge of the one true God of Israel. This was her highest and best reward. The thought that she had been called by God to a state of life where it lay in her power to win one single soul, must have sweetened the cup of her slavery, and more than made amends for the loss of her friends, her parents, and her home. How must she have rejoiced, as a true daughter of the faith of Abraham, in bearing a part and a share in those events which led her master to know and to worship that God and that Father, whom she had been taught to remember in the days of her youth?

Now, as we know that God dealt thus with haughty Naaman through his servants and the little captive maiden whom he numbered among his household, it is quite clear that we may apply the obvious lesson practically to our own selves. Christian persons are often disposed to excuse themselves from using real exertion in the cause of God and of His Church. They do not mean, I think, wilfully to withdraw from any known duty; but they do too often hold back, when they might do good to a brother's soul. Now how do such people know that they are not refusing to do the very work which God has marked out for them? and if this be so, can

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they be free from sin? I think not. They are not apt to plead in excuse that they are able to do very little; it is not for such as they to undertake in so great a work. Now what is this excuse in other and plainer words, but that of Cain, "I am my brother's keeper?" In the condition of Naaman's servants, and especially of the captive maiden, let such learn a lesson that suits their case. Do they ask what that lesson is? It is this, neither more nor less. None but Christians, no baptized person, is too poor, too mean, too young, too humble, too ignorant to serve God acceptably and even to advance to some degree His truth and His kingdom on earth. Shall, I ask, a poor captive maiden from the land of Israel, and she a very child in years, be used by the Most Highest as the means of opening to Naaman a ray of the knowledge of His glory and His power? and then shall any Christian, however young, or poor, or feeble, doubt whether he can do any thing in this sacred cause? Oh, do not think so, Christian brother, whoever you may be! These words fall into the hands of many a Christian child, and many a Christian servant. To both of them I would speak plainly. In every deed you may serve God in that sphere and station of life

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which it hath pleased Him to call you. Both of you can silently bear your witness to God's truth, by "letting your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

As a Christian servant you can live a holy life in your earthly master's family, and so rebuke those who live otherwise than as redeemed men should live. You can shew by your actions that the service which you render him, you pay "as to the Lord, and not to men." (Eph. vi. 7.) The very contrast between your life, and that of those among whom your lot is cast, will be a reproof to them, when they see you acting in worldly matters with consistent devotion to your earthly master's interests, and in all other things "as the servants of Christ."

Or, again, as a Christian child, you can do at least as much as the little captive maid. In your home you may live, if you will, with your brothers and sisters, as children dedicated to a common Saviour, and gifted with a common portion of His Holy Spirit which dwelleth in you, and maketh your body to be His temple. You may live together as members of one redeemed family—one, I say, though part be toiling here *on earth*, while part is beyond the

vail in rest and peace, (Eph. iii. 15;)—by setting an example of early prayer like Samuel, of purity like Joseph, of filial obedience like your Blessed Saviour, when He dwelt at Nazareth a child “subject” to His earthly parents, and “grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” (St. Luke ii. 51, 52.) To speak more in detail; has any one of my Christian readers bad and wicked parents, or brothers, or sisters? does he hear bad language spoken at home, and God’s name taken in vain? does he see His house of prayer and praise forsaken? His holy day dishonoured? His ministers made light of? prayer to Him forgotten? Then I would say to him, you may serve your God to good effect. Not by harsh or angry speeches, not by reviling your friends, and especially your parents; but, young and feeble as you are, by quietly following the example of God’s true servants. Make the precepts of the Holy Bible to bear upon your daily life. Point out with gentleness and modesty, as a child should do, the sins which you are forced to see; shew that young as you are, you are “very zealous for the Lord God of Hosts;” shew that you have a tender conscience, and “eyes that gush out with water, because men *keep not* God’s law.” (Ps. cxix. 136.) By one

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gentle word, spoken at the fitting time, the little Jewish maiden brought the blessing of a cure to her heathen master ; and much more may you, a Christian, who in holy baptism have received the good gift of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of God's grace, turn the soul of a master, a friend, a brother, or a parent, and so (blessed thought !) may cause that joy in heaven, which is felt by the angels of God, nay, and by God Himself, over one sinner that repenteth.

This then is one lesson,—None so humble but he may faithfully serve his God, and aid the cause of God's truth. But the other lesson yet remains. Let us notice how God is wont to work His mightiest ends by the humblest means. Let us then learn not to despise His means, however humble they may be. He did not will, as He might have willed, to set Naaman free from his leprosy by the word of Elisha's mouth unattended with any outward sign. God might have bid His prophet say, "I will, be thou clean." But such was not His will. He chose rather to tie the blessing to the outward sign, and so try and test the faith of Naaman, before He permitted a cure to be worked upon him. And so, instead of "coming out to meet him" in his armed array, and "*standing*" and "*calling on*

the name of his God," and "striking his hand the place," Elisha bid him journey to the Jordan, and there "wash" his body, not only, but "seven times," and so "be clean." And though Naaman in his pride exclaimed, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel? may I wash in them and be clean?" Yet it was so. Far from it. The "rivers of Damascus" may have been broad, and clear, and wide, greater and more renowned than the humble stream of Jordan. Nay, they may have had their healing powers "better" and "healthier" than "all the waters of Israel." It may, it might have sounded harsh to his ears, this preference of Jordan to the rivers of Damascus,—but this stream, which he despised, was gifted by God, working in and through His minister Elisha, with a far nobler power than other waters to bring to pass His ends. This was not, as you may remember, the first miracle that its waves had witnessed; and the same God who once had caused its waters to stand on a heap, while His chosen people passed through dry-shod, now willed that they should have power to recover a leper of the leprosy; that they should do what no other waters *could do*;—that Naaman should "wash" in it.

and so "be clean." He did so ; and we know that at once "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

Now in the New Testament we are taught not only that the children of Israel and their fortunes in general are types of the Christian Church and of her state of warfare and probation here, but that the events, and even the characters, persons, and things recorded in the Old Testament, were designed by God to point as types to things which should be hereafter. Thus not only are Adam, Melchisedek, Joshua, and David, types of Christ, but in Ahithophel we see the type of the traitor Judas ; in Ishmael and Isaac, of the two covenants, the law and the gospel, (Gal. iv. 24 ;) in the tree of life, in the manna, and in the shew-bread, we read types of the holy eucharistic feast ; and so in like manner we find that the flood and the passage of the Red Sea, among many other events, are types of Christian baptism. (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21 ; 1 Cor. x. 1—4.) It is impossible not to find a type of the same character in the story of Naaman. What is leprosy ? the type of sin. What is Naaman ? a type of the gentile world, lying in sin, and as yet unreconciled to its God. What is water ? the type of the cleansing and refreshing grace of God's Holy Spirit. And

the river Jordan, what is this? It is the very stream, through which, as by a baptism, the chosen race had passed into actual possession of their promised land, the very stream in which, "by the baptism of God's well-beloved Son, water was sanctified to the mystical washing away of sin." (Office for Public Baptism of Infants.)

Surely, then, we may see, in the words of St. Paul, how "these things happened as examples," or rather as "types," and how that they "are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Cor. x. 11.) A lesson then is here for those who think lightly of the blessings of holy baptism. Would "Abana and Pharpar" have profited Naaman, when God had blessed the waters of Jordan only? As little then may they who despise the waters of the sacred font, expect to receive God's blessings elsewhere. God still works by the use of outward means. The same God that gave to Jordan a power and a nature which of its own self it could not have, works powerfully by uniting His Holy Spirit with the baptismal water, and through it heals our leprosy by the remission of our sins. Oh! how it makes one's heart to ache, and one's "eyes to gush out with water," when we see that Naamans still are

found, and that in Christian lands and in the Christian Church, to doubt the efficacy of the waters of our Jordan! "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them and be clean?" To human eyes, to those who will walk by sight and not by faith, it may be so: it will ever be so. But God has willed that it should be far otherwise. It is He who has said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (St. John iii. 5.) It is His own Apostle who has said, "According to His mercy, He (hath) saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," (Titus iii. 5;) and again, (to translate literally,) "All ye who have been baptized into Jesus Christ, have put on Christ." (Gal. iii. 27.) We may think that we should have been very happy if we could but see truth in all its fulness, and know how these things are so. But this will never be our lot here below. May God then give both to you and to me, my brother in Christ, the grace that we may walk here by faith and not by sight; that we may lean less upon what we see, and more upon the unseen things of God's holy Word, as taught us by the Church of Christ! May He Who alone can do it,

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teach us in all sacred things to submit our reason to our faith ; not to raise idle questions, but to do His will with a ready heart : to rest content with partial knowledge now ; to possess our souls in patience, to abide His time ; thankfully to use His means of grace without cavil or dispute, in the midst of a thankless and unbelieving age ; and for a perfect knowledge of His hallowed mysteries, to look forward to that blessed day when we shall " see Him face to face, and shall know Him even as also we are known ! "

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Harvest lessons.

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, 2 Kings x. ; *Evening*, 2 Kings xviii.
EPISTLE, 2 Cor. iii. 4. GOSPEL, St. Mark vii. 31.

A GREAT many of our readers will most probably be engaged about this time in the labours of harvest; either actually working with their own hands in the fields, or superintending their workmen. It will not be out of place at such season, to turn their attention to some of the practical lessons which the time of harvest seems specially designed to teach us. Nor should these lessons be passed over by such as are not busied in the harvest fields. For to these also the occupations of harvest are signs and parables of many heavenly truths which concern their souls. It is indeed God's usual method of teaching, to make the outward objects or employments of this world, the pictures to us of spiritual realities. In this way, for instance, the rainbow carries back our thoughts to God's promise to Noah, and His faithfulness to a

thousand generations. The refreshing dew
 us of God's best blessing, His Holy Spirit
 softens and refreshes the heart. The lily
 the field may teach us contentment, and
 the flight of a sparrow give us a lesson of
 in the watchful providence of our Heavenly
 Father. The bread which we eat, and the
 we drink set before us Christ Jesus the
 Bread from heaven, and His Spirit the
 water which springeth up unto everlasting
 life. Thus also the wicked are compared to
 which is green to-day, and dried up and
 withered to-morrow. In like manner the
 employments of ploughing and sowing and
 are continually made use of in Holy Scripture
 for the sake of impressing spiritual things
 on our hearts. Thus the whole of nature
 is one sense, a sacrament, an outward visible
 sign of inward and spiritual grace; so that even
 a labourer be unable to read, yet if he accustoms
 himself to seek for God in every thing he
 meets around him, if he tries to look on earthly
 things as intended to raise him to the thought of
 heaven, his daily labour will be a book to
 continually furnishing him with matter for
 meditation. We may apply this mode
struction to the business with which

ands and thoughts are now more particularly
 xupied. The harvest.

I. It is obvious that, to every serious-minded
 erson, the season of harvest ought to be a
 ason of especial thankfulness to Almighty God,
 r its yearly return does most strongly press
 pon us the unchangeable truth of God's promise.
 ore than 4000 years ago God solemnly assured
 loah, that "while the earth remaineth, seed-
 ime and harvest, cold and heat, and summer
 and winter, and day and night, shall not cease."

(Gen. viii. 22.) It is true this promise has some-
 times appeared to fail. Seed-time and harvest
 have been known to fail, but why? because of
 the wickedness of man. It is man's sin alone
 which prevents God's blessing from descending.
 During that terrible time in the land of Israel,
 when it rained not on the earth for the space of
 three years and six months, and there was in
 consequence a very grievous famine, what was
 t which caused all that distress? truly it was
 he idolatry of the people. They had turned
 themselves wholly to the worship of Baal. And
 od, to bring them to a sense of their danger,
 has visited them with the scourge of famine.

It was not that God had forgotten them, or
 his own promise, but they had forgotten Him.

And so in all cases when God's Word to fail, we may be sure the fault is with
 Indeed we have cause to wonder at and
 God's forbearance, for that He continu
 shower down so many blessings upon our
 When we consider the fearful amount of
 edness that is prevalent; when we lo
 the profanation of Sunday, or the drunk
 which is every where the curse and ruin
 people, or the swearing and violent lan
 that is often heard among the very lab
 who are reaping God's bountiful harvest
 and I fear too, often among their master
 are storing His gifts in their barns;
 we consider all this disregard of God an
 holy laws, it is a wonder that God forbear
 still causes His blessed sun to shine and
 to fall that there may be seed for the
 and bread for the eater. Dare we thin
 the Almighty takes no notice of these c
 because He does not take speedy veng
 for them? Nay, it is only the fool who
 "There is no God," "Tush, how shoul
 know? Is there knowledge in the Most H
 The Christian knows that it is the mercy o
 alone, through the never-ceasing intercessi
His dear Son, which restrains the wrath re

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fall on the ungodly. He forbears to punish, because He is long-suffering, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Harvest after harvest is safely gathered in, because God delighteth in mercy, and judgment is His strange work. Let us acknowledge this mercy. Let us all take heed how we help to increase the sins of our nation or our parish by our own individual sins. When He draws us to Himself with the cords of love, let us turn to Him in earnest, and by our true repentance and our thankfulness honour His Holy Name. Now this lesson of thankfulness which harvest especially teaches is the more impressed upon us by the precepts which God gave to His ancient people the Jews at this season. For forty years they wandered in the wilderness where there was neither earing nor harvest, subsisting on manna, that "angels' food," which God provided for them by a daily miracle. At last they reached the borders of that good land, where He promised they should eat bread to the full. Lest, however, they should grow careless and thankless when they lived in plenty, and appeared to depend only on the labours of their own hands, God gave them beforehand many strict rules for their conduct. *In Leviticus xxiii. 9, 10, 11 ; "The Lord*

priest ; and he shall wave the sheaf before Lord, to be accepted for you." And in the verse ; " Ye shall eat neither bread, nor p corn, nor green ears, until the self-same day ye have brought an offering unto your (it shall be a statute for ever throughout generations, in all your dwellings."

The Jews, then, were forbidden to taste their new corn, until first the wave sheaf had been offered in the tabernacle. And this offering, in the name of all the congregation, sanctified their whole harvest. It was an acknowledgment that every good thing they enjoyed came only from the hand of God ; that they ploughed and sowed, God only gave

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ference to Him, then may they enjoy with a peaceful conscience the good things He has provided for them. "Go thy way" saith the Preacher, "eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thy works." (Eccl. ix. 7.) It was thus with the early Christians, whose life is described in the Acts of the Apostles. "They continued daily with one accord in the Temple." They even daily received the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Their whole life was a life of prayer and thanksgiving. No wonder therefore that we hear of their "eating their meal with gladness and singleness of heart." (Acts ii. 46.) If God, then, gave such strict commands about Jewish offerings, depend upon it He expects still better offerings from us Christians. He expects us to give up our bodies and souls to His service. This is the "living, holy and acceptable sacrifice," in which alone God can take pleasure for Christ's sake. In return for His gifts to us, He looks that we acknowledge Him in all our ways, that we fear Him and love Him more, that we break off all such sinful habits as have grieved His Holy Spirit hitherto, that we "give alms of our goods and never turn our face from any poor man,"

that we shew all the love and kindness in our power to our brethren, being "ready to give, and hoping for nothing in return," and so returning to God a part of what He graciously bestows on us. This is the Christian's wave sheaf, a far higher and nobler offering than the Jewish.

II. We are reminded by the harvest, of the great necessity of making the most of all means of grace and opportunities of instruction. It is written, (Proverbs x. 5,) "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son; but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame." Most true is this proverb in its literal meaning. Who would not cry shame on the farmer or the labourer who should loiter away his precious time while the crops were spoiling in the fields, while labour was in the greatest demand, and the highest wages were to be earned? Who would be surprised if such foolish conduct brought poverty and misery in its train?

But do not the Preacher's words contain a still deeper lesson? Are they not true of spiritual things? When he says that it is wise to gather in summer, he means that a wise man will diligently avail himself of the means of grace *within his reach*. For instance; youth is the

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season for gathering instruction and learning God's will. Generally speaking, there is but one such harvest of instruction to be reaped in the course of our lives. If that be neglected or wasted, alas! there is little hope of redeeming the time in after life. Children and young persons can learn much more quickly, as we all know, than those advanced in life. How constantly we may hear old persons regretting bitterly, either that they never enjoyed such a summer of instruction in their childhood, for lack of schools and teachers, or else that 'they did not care for it when it was within their reach, and in old age they find it impossible to apply their minds to instruction like they could when they were young and fresh. Every child then who goes to school may draw this lesson from harvest. He may say, "If I do not lay up store of knowledge now, if I do not love my school and my books now, perhaps I shall never have such another opportunity. I shall be like the fool who sleeps in harvest, I shall come to great shame."

Again, health and strength is the harvest season for serving God, for forming good habits of watchfulness, soberness, prayer. Strong healthy people, if they have a good will, can *much more readily practise these duties, than*

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such as are weak and sickly. But health and strength will not last for ever, any more than the natural harvest. If God be not served in the time of strength, the evil days will soon come, the winter of life, when we shall say, "I have no pleasure in them;" when it will be a toil to begin a religious life, when Christ's service will seem a heavy and not a light yoke. The devil knows this well, therefore he continually whispers to the young, "You had better take as much of the world's pleasure as you can, while you can enjoy it. As to the service of God, that will be most convenient when nothing else can be attended to. Put it off till old age, or a sick bed." If men were to act upon such advice in their worldly affairs, we should conclude with reason that they were out of their senses. Imagine what would be said of a man, who, when the corn was fully ripe and the weather beautiful, instead of putting the sickle to his crop, should begin to make excuses, to plead some other engagements, or some trifling amusement, and with that put off his harvest for a month or two, to a more convenient season! Oh! if this be such madness to waste the harvest of the bread that perishes, how much *more* madness to waste the precious days of

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h and strength which were given us for express purpose of laying up a store of against the day of sickness and death.

Reader, if you are young and strong, remember that God expects you to give Him the first-fruits of your strength. If you will not devote Him the best of your days, do not expect He will bless you when you are old. Never, never put off beginning a religious life to a more convenient season. It will delude you and deceive before you like those deceitful lights which ensnare the traveller in marshy countries. At last it will disappear altogether, you will find your days wasted, your strength spent, and you will still be far from God and from your eternal home; you will be forced to cry, "The best is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." (Jer. viii. 20.)

One more practical application of the same truth may be made as regards the spending the Lord's Day profitably. Sunday seems to be to the rest of the week, what the harvest is to the rest of the year. To the poor especially it is the best time, often the only time for gathering wisdom and grace for guidance and support during the ensuing week. Reader, ask yourself *what use you make of this your weekly harvest?*

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Do you try to learn God's will from what you hear read and preached to you on the Sunday? Do you earnestly seek for fresh grace and strength by diligent attendance on God's ordinances? Or do you spend Sunday in sloth and idleness, making it a day of rest to your body only, without caring about your soul? If you do spend your Sunday well, then without a doubt you have God's blessing upon you, and you feel that you have, during the week. A man who takes care of the Sunday hours, will not go very far astray from the path of God's commands. But after an ill-spent Sunday, nothing will really prosper with you, and on your death-bed, depend upon it, your wasted Sundays will rise up in fearful review before you, and press heavily upon your conscience.

III. Our blessed Lord speaks of the season of harvest in His parable of the wheat and tares. It is a parable simple enough for the most unlearned, we read it in St. Matt. xiii. 24, and we have Christ's own explanation of its meaning, beginning at the 37th verse; "He that sowed the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the

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levil : the harvest is the end of the world ; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire ; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity ; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” How full of instruction is this parable for all who are engaged in harvest work. What solemn thoughts may it not inspire in their minds as they go forth to their work and to their labour until the evening. Would not such thoughts of the last great harvest be the means under God of checking much vain and wicked conversation which goes on in the harvest fields ? Would not this be a holier and happier harvest to all, whether reapers or masters, if they tried to keep in mind the infinite importance of that great day when the Son of Man shall return “ bringing His sheaves with Him ? ” When angels shall be the reapers, and sinners who have delighted in each other’s company in sin here must fall bound together in bundles into the furnace of God’s wrath ? Reader, *endeavour to cherish these holy thoughts.* Use

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the prayer which you will find at the end of this tract before you start to your work in the morning, and as occasion serves, talk to your companions and fellow-labourers of the many good lessons which their harvest-work may teach them. And by thus keeping the thought of God before you, your daily toil will be sweetened. It will help to prepare your soul for the harvest of the last day, so that that day shall not come upon you unawares, but shall find you watching for your Lord. Then will His holy angels rejoice over you, and bear your souls to His everlasting garner. You shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of your Father.

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PRAYER TO BE SAID BY LABOURERS DURING
THE TIME OF HARVEST.

O MOST merciful Father, who alone makest the earth to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater ; we beseech Thee to bless the labours of our hands in reaping and storing the fruits of the ground. Go forth with us, O Lord, to our work and to our labour until evening. Grant that we may never abuse Thy goodness by forgetfulness of Thee, or by using any wicked or angry language while we are gathering the gifts of Thy bounty, but give us such a thankful sense of Thy mercy, as shall shew itself in our humble, holy, and obedient lives ; and at the last great harvest may Thy holy angels gather us safely into Thy heavenly garner ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire, or deserve; Pour down upon us the abundance of Thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

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The good Samaritan.

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, 2 Kings xix.; *Evening*, 2 Kings xxiii.

EPISTLE, Gal. iii. 16. GOSPEL, St. Luke x. 23.

To those who believe that the whole of "Scripture is given by inspiration of God," written by the Holy Ghost, it is no small confirmation of their faith to observe how the same great truths are revealed there in many different ways, and under very varying circumstances. The books of Scripture are written in such different styles, that no one can possibly imagine that they were all penned by one man. For example, the Book of Proverbs and the Epistle to the Hebrews, Isaiah and the Epistle of St. James, bear evident marks of being not composed by the same author. The historical books of the Old Testament and the four Gospels contain decisive proofs of being written at very different periods of the world. Yet throughout all these books from Genesis to Revelation, there runs a continuous current of the same divine

truth; and what I wish you, reader, particularly to remark is, how the very same portion of truth is taught in different places according to the particular style and nature of the composition. What prophets foretold, what the ceremonies and observances of the old law typified, what wise men pronounced in Proverbs, and poets sung in Psalms and Hymns, what expounders taught in parables, what preachers propounded as facts and doctrines, are in other places prefigured in histories and narratives, and elsewhere incidentally, and as it might almost seem unintentionally, revealed in conversations and passing remarks. If one man had composed the whole, it is possible to imagine that his mind was so fully possessed with the full truth of God that it, as it were, oozed out on every occasion. But since many hands have helped to frame the books of Holy Writ, how can we account for this oneness of doctrine, this impregnation of all their words with one seed, but by believing that one Spirit dictated all, one Mind, infinite in power, instructed all, one Breath, the Holy Ghost, breathed into all, and so the whole atmosphere of Scripture is imbued with the Eternal Truth?

The Gospel for this day furnishes a remarkable

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and most beautiful instance of this. In the parable of the good Samaritan our blessed Lord is instructing the lawyer in his duty to his neighbour, teaching him the absurdity of his own notion, that they were not his neighbours who were not of the same faith and blood with himself, and enlarging his views of the obligation he was laid under by the command "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And to effect this, He speaks this parable, wherewith He instances a poor man attacked on a lonely road by thieves, who having robbed him left him by the road-side half dead. A priest and a Levite of his own religion passed him by without offering any assistance; but a kind Samaritan, who was estranged from the poor sufferer both by religion and nation, delayed his own journey to shew him attention and kindness of no ordinary character, and that without any hope of a return from the object of his kindness. Undoubtedly the plain purpose of the parable was that which the lawyer at once entered into, viz., to shew to him that true love does not stop to consider who the person be on whom the love is to be shewn, but measures its duties only by its own capabilities. Our Lord taught the lawyer that, *beyond a doubt, every one who might be able*

to afford him such aid, must be his neighbour, with a claim to receive such aid from him.

But this is by no means all which the parable teaches us. Its very words, and the minuteness of its details, suggest a deeper meaning to be hid within its folds. Herein is revealed as we shall see presently, incidentally, as though not of express purpose, the whole mystery of man's redemption from sin and death by the birth and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no effort to bring it before our notice: we may read the parable if we will, as the lawyer heard it; with our eyes intent upon one side of it, and learn holy lessons of heavenly truth and wisdom thereupon. But when a deeper mine is opened to us we can but acknowledge the treasures drawn hence, and confess that He who furnished the storehouse as well as the stores, and the means of drawing them out, can be none other than the Eternal Spirit, The One God, equal with the Father and the Son.

Let us attend a little to this deeper meaning of the parable. The man who was on his journey means mankind, the whole race of man from Adam downwards. Jerusalem, the city from which he was going, is heaven, and Jericho, the city to *which* his steps were turned, is hell; for Jericho

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the city which had been cursed by God, still lay under that curse. (Josh. vi. 26; Judges xvi. 34.) Man no sooner leaves the heavenly city, that is, departs ever so little from the presence of the Lord God, than he is met in his way by Satan and his hosts of evil angels. They exert the mastery over him, because his steps are turned away from God, and therefore He who is stronger than the devil is not with him. "They stripped him of his raiment." The garment of righteousness, wherein he was like God, is rent from him, and the robe of immortality; he became in that moment a sinner, and the victim of death. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." (Rom. v. 12.) No sooner had Adam and Eve eaten the forbidden fruit, than they "knew that they were naked." The righteousness in which they were created, and the glory which encompassed them from the image of God, had been as garments to veil from them their own nakedness: sin stripped them of these, and left them naked and ashamed. But Satan is not content with this: he "wounded" him, with a deadly wound, not causing, blessed be God, immediate death, but hopelessly fatal if the remedies were not at once and with activity applied. *Half dead" and ready to die is man left by sin,*

not utterly without hope, wounded sorely, even mortally injured, life threatened, so that "from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores." This was the state of mankind in consequence of Adam's sin, and not one single thing could he do to raise himself or to heal his wounds. He was obliged to wait there in his sins till God should of His great mercy do any thing for his relief. First, there came the law of Moses, or as it is commonly called in the Bible, "the law," i. e. all the commands and religious observances which God

gave to His people Israel in the wilderness. But these could not save man. The command was, "This do and thou shalt live." But it was wholly impossible for any man to "do" it; therefore no man could by this means "live." Then God gave abundance of outward observances, altar, sacrifices, priests, washings, dresses, solemn days, but none of these things could touch man's heart, nor blot one sin out of God's Book. So that all this law, "holy, and just, and good," could not really set poor fallen man one step further on his road, nor bind up one of his wounds. Was there then no help for him? *Were his wounds quite beyond the reach of*

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dicine and physician's skill? "Is there no man in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" (a. viii. 22.) One Physician alone is to be found, and one medicine only of sovereign efficacy for this dreadful disease. This Physician intended in the parable by the Samaritan. And who is He but Christ Jesus? It is remarkable that when the Jews upbraided Him and said, "Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil," He only replied, "I have not a devil;" He did not refuse to be called "a Samaritan." When Christ saw poor man thus disabled and afflicted by sin, He "had compassion on him." Not content with mere inactive pity, He "went to him," He came down from heaven to this world where man was lying, and then died for us to heal our sins, to take them away, and to restore peace to our souls. How did Christ bind up our wounded souls? By the Sacraments, wherein He grants us freedom, and grace to do better for the time to come, and comfort in our sorrow for sin. He pours in oil and wine, the oil of the Holy Ghost to soothe, and to sanctify; the wine of His own precious Blood to refresh and restore our wasting strength and drooping spirits. "He set him on His own back," and therefore of course must have walked

by his side. So Christ, who "was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.) He was not content with taking our lower nature, but must likewise lift us up to His own higher nature, "that ye might be partakers of the divine nature." (2 Pet. i. 4.) "And brought him to an inn," even into the Church. This Church, Christ has specially left, that therein all His children may be cared for and fed and nourished, as the field wherein all His sheep that have wandered and been found again may be tended and provided for, till He comes back again. He has left His ministers with charge over His people, as the Samaritan gave authority to the host, and with the express command "Take care of him." "Feed My sheep," "feed My lambs." For He Himself has gone away; we may say He was obliged to depart, He could not tarry longer here below. He must go whence He came. But He has promised to return; and during His absence has fully and richly provided for those whom He pities. The "two pence" perhaps are the two Sacraments, or the Old and New Testaments; at any rate they mean the various gifts and graces, the rites and ordinances of the Church, which Christ has left to His ministers

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for the good of His people. They for whom He died are not left without a home to shelter them, nor without food to nourish them, nor yet without friends to help and feed and take care of them. Christ though absent in body is still present with His Church in Spirit; He makes the food effectual, He gives force to the instruments by which that food is conveyed, and He guides and instructs those who dispense it. But He will come again in body one day to see how they do; and then He will repay those ministers for what they have done; He will richly reward them who have watched and tended His lambs; He will make the faithful servants to sit down and eat with Him at His table, He will Himself be their abiding portion for ever and ever.

We have then in this parable the whole scheme of our redemption shadowed forth, as the world would say, by accident; but we know that no words ever fell from the lips of the Son of Man, but He intended more by them than the mind of any other men can ever conceive. But this we may say, that when He would teach the lawyer by an instructive story the duty of love to his neighbour, He did, as it were incidentally, *set before him* the highest possible

example of brotherly love, even His own love for man: "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John xv. 13.)

Christian reader, did you ever think how far the last words of to-day's Gospel apply to you, "Go and do thou likewise?" Did you ever pass by a neighbour in distress, instead of helping him? Did you ever get out of the trouble, as you thought it, by saying it was not your business, you could not be hindered in your work, you hoped some proper person would attend to him, and that really there are so many cases of distress you cannot help them all? Do not you see that these are, in a general way, only flimsy excuses? excuses to save yourself the trouble of doing as Christ did for you, and of laying up for yourselves an abundant treasure in heaven? Did you ever search out a person in trouble, and make it your business and delight to watch by him, feed him, nurse him, wait on him, dress his wounds, bathe his temples, give him his medicine, make his bed, go messages for him, take care of his children, and so forth? This is neighbourly love, something of the same love as that which He had for us who was the Good Samaritan. *If you have rather shrunk from the annoyance*

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and fatigue and inconvenience of such a course, and with shame learn a lesson from the good Samaritan. It is not too late; you have neighbours still spared to you, for whom if you can do anything else, you can at least remember them in our prayers. Perhaps to this, you may add now and then a friendly word of advice or comfort, and above all the example of patience and cheerfulness.

“THE fear of man bringeth a snare,” saith the Wise Man; “but whoso trusteth in the Lord happy is he.” The difference, and inequality that appears in the conduct of Hezekiah, affords a remarkable example of both these axioms. In one and the same person we behold an instance of that ensnaring fear, and this happy trust: his mean and abject submission to the king of Assyria, as related in the foregoing chapter, (2 Kings xviii. ;) and especially the sacrilegious price he paid to purchase peace, plainly argued too great cowardice for one who professed the true religion, and had the God of Jacob for his refuge. But the *measures he now takes upon the blasphemous*

message of Sennacherib is a pattern worth imitation. First, he consults the prophet, repairs to the temple, and commends the affair into the hand of God, in a pious zeal and profound humility.

His message to the prophet is an example and instruction to all that are in trouble, to seek the word of God for advice and relief, to repair to the House of the Lord and to lay the blaspheming letter before God, may be that a recourse to prayer and the publicity of God is the best security against punishment, especially in a concern of religion, where the honour of God is blasphemed and His power are too mighty for us to deal with; in such exigence the most effectual means against them, is to commit the whole to the devout and humble prayer.

From this part of Hezekiah's example we also learn wherein true Christian fortitude consists. It is true he rent his clothes; and covered himself with sackcloth. And such courses seem to worldly people to be a mark of cowardice. But if we consult the same story as related 2 Chron. xxxii., we there find he acted a prudent and courageous, as well as religious part. It is there said

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unsel with his princes,—stopped the waters,—
rtified the city,—gathered an army,—set captains
war over the people,—spake comfortably to them,
nd said,—Be strong and courageous, be not
raid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor
r all the multitude that is with him.” This
e must allow shewed both prudence and
urage. But what is farther related, and par-
cularly in this lesson, shews us what was the
re ground of courage ; it was a firm trust and
iance upon God. He rent his clothes indeed,
d covered himself with sackcloth ; but this was
propitiate God by repentance for those sins
ich had provoked the Lord to send so formid-
e an army against him ; and very probably
his unbecoming fears. The effect of this re-
tance, accompanied now with a greater zeal
the honour of God, was a firm and unshaken
ance on the assistance and protection of the
mighty, so that he could boldly say, in his
ech to his army, “Be not dismayed for the
g of Assyria, nor for the multitude that is
h him, for there be more with us than with
1 ; with him is an arm of flesh, but with us
he Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our
tles.” And then it follows (as a proof of the
ghty efficacy of such a divine confidence) “The

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people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah, king of Judah."

Fortitude then is not so properly a cardinal virtue, but the result of many united virtues: particularly of humility, and a just diffidence of ourselves; a conscience purified by repentance, and without offence; a pious dependance upon God, grounded on a just knowledge of ourselves and a due sense of His Almighty power and mercy; so that a true faith is also a necessary ingredient in the composition of true fortitude. This is finely described and exemplified (ver. 21 of our lesson) in the character of a virgin, the daughter of Zion, laughing at the hearty threats of the Assyrian king; not terrified, though a virgin, but despising him, while she placed her trust in God. This made the Wise Man say, "The righteous are bold as a lion." This also inspired the Psalmist with such undaunted resolution and triumph, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom then shall I be afraid?" &c. See also Ps. xlv. ; Acts iv. 29 &c.

We see then in this lesson, the powerful influence and happy effect of humility, of prayer, and a pious recourse to the Word of God in all *times* of trouble: that faith and trust in Him is

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he true and only sure foundation of fortitude and courage. At the same time the destruction of the Assyrian king and his army, shews us the just reward of blasphemy and the downfall of pride.

WOGAN ON THE PROPER LESSONS.

ON CHARITY, OR THE LOVE OF GOD.

Love gives away all things, that so he may advance the interest of the beloved person: it relieves all that he would have relieved, and spends itself in such real significations as it is enabled withal. He never loved God, that will quit any thing of his religion to save his money. Love is always liberal and communicative.

It suffers all things that are imposed by its beloved, or that can happen for his sake, or that intervene in his service, cheerfully, sweetly, willingly; expecting that God should turn them into good, and instruments of felicity; "Charity hopeth all things, endureth all things." Love is patient and content with any thing, so it be together with its beloved.

Love is also impatient of any thing that may displease *the beloved person*, hating all sin as the

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enemy of its friend; for love contracts all the same relations, and marries the same friendships and the same hatreds; and all affection to a sin is perfectly inconsistent with the love of God. Love is not divided between God and God's enemy: we must love God with all our heart; that is, give Him a whole and undivided affection, having love for nothing else but such things which He allows, and which He commands or loves Himself.

JEREMY TAYLOR.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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Gratitude.

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, Jer. v. ; *Evening*, Jer. xxii.
EPISTLE, Gal. v. 16. GOSPEL, St. Luke xvii. 11.

THERE is nothing which men generally so much resent as they do the imputation of ingratitude. Call me, say they, hasty if you will, or call me proud, but do not say that I am ungrateful. Strange that they should be thus sensitive in regard to the opinion of their fellow-creatures on this point, and yet that they should remain unmoved by the fact of their constant ingratitude towards their best benefactor and friend. For where is the man whose conscience does not pronounce him guilty in this respect? Who cannot be otherwise than conscious of having received "mercies countless as the sand," for which he has made no return of gratitude and love; nay, perhaps, not even so far as to have lifted up his heart to God in devout adoration and praise?

And yet it cannot be because the Word of

always for all things unto God and the Father
the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In proof of the assertion which we just made let us take an instance which concerns all. It pleased Almighty God during the year, to send a plague among us, which assuming the form of cholera swept off its thousands on the right hand and on the left, and filled the land with "lamentation and mourning woe." Prayer was made for the removal of the scourge; prayer was offered up from one end of the country to the other, first in one language and then in another, and the Lord was glorified for the land; in judgment He remembered mercy, and His chastening hand

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the feelings which were called into action by the solemn services of that day soon died away, and that almost with the day itself the whole matter ended ; it was but an acting over again the melancholy scene presented in the Gospel of to-day, then cleansed, and only one remained.

But I know how prone we all are to shelter ourselves under generalities, and to take comfort from the consideration that we are not worse than others in this respect, and to shift off from ourselves the blame which justly belongs to the neglect of ordinary every-day mercies, or of those which have been vouchsafed to us in common with others around us. Let us then endeavour to come home a little closer and to deal faithfully with ourselves, whilst we ask whether there be not especial mercies which we have each one received at different periods of our lives which call for an especial remembrance ; turning points, perhaps, and eras in our very existence of which we should never have lost sight, and yet which we have strangely forgotten, as if no one were interested in them.

For instance, may there not be amongst the number of those into whose hands this tract may come, some who have been most unexpectedly *raised up from a bed of sickness*, and that

too after all hope of recovery had been abandoned both on their own part and on that of their relations and friends? may there not be others who through God's providential care have been preserved from perils and dangers of various kinds; e. g. from that to which they have been exposed by horses, by accidents on railways, by fire or flood? may not others have been carried in safety through long voyages by sea, or wearisome and unsafe journeys by land? whilst others again have been permitted to return to their native land after a long residence in some foreign and perhaps unhealthy clime, in which the pestilence walked in darkness and the arrow flew in the noon-day. Whilst, lastly, a few may have been permitted to heap up riches, to build up fortunes for themselves and families; and, what to every generous mind is far better, have been happy enough to get honour among their fellow men, perhaps have been ennobled by the sovereign for services which they have been enabled to render the state either at home or abroad. And what return have they made for all this? You will say they have given God thanks. I ask where is the proof of it? what memorial of their gratitude remains? Do you ask what memorial we would have had them

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erect? I answer, how did Jacob act after that he had seen that wondrous vision at Bethel which assured him of God's love and care; "he rose up early in the morning and took the stone that he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a pillar and poured oil upon the top of it, and he called the name of that place Bethel," (i. e. the house of God.) "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house; and of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."

Again, how did Samuel act when God in answer to his prayer discomfited the host of the Philistines, and wrought a mighty deliverance in behalf of His people Israel? We read (1 Sam. vii. 12.) "Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." He was evidently deeply affected at this display of divine mercy, and determined to erect some public and lasting testimonial of the *loving-kindness* of the Lord, not only as a

one, and as such was acceptable to God, independent from the fact afterwards made known, that "the Philistines were subdued and came no more into the coast of Israel; and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines the days of Samuel."

Be assured that these instances are recorded in Holy Scripture for nought, but they are written for our instruction, and worthy of our consideration and imitation.

You will observe, then, that in each of these cases, they did what they could; and it is for every reason I have adduced them as examples for ourselves, and because the memorials erected were of such a nature as not only to

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Him in a more decorous if not more acceptable manner; or by their nature would be abiding mementos of what the Lord had done for them; not allowing His mercies to vanish from their minds, but all the days of their lives, reminding them of the great debt they owed to the Author of all good.

And now to apply these remarks to some of these cases to which we just now alluded; what is the appropriate offering to the Lord could he be who has been raised from a bed of sickness, whose life has been prolonged through some long constitutional disease, than to give, according to his ability, to one of those many hospitals which have been established throughout the length and breadth of the land for the alleviation of bodily or mental suffering; or in case of God blessing him with ample means, of what incalculable good may not the foundation of some new fresh institution be to ages yet to come.

Again, what more proper than that he who has been "in journeyings often and in perils of the sea," and hath, in God's mercy, been carried safely along, as well as safely through, should think of those to whom those comforts have been denied;—of the poor pilgrim to whom a way-side *place of rest* would indeed have been a

boon ; or, of the poor emigrant from the fatherland, who has not only felt all the discomfort of a crowded ship but what is far worse, has been exposed to that moral contagion which, unluckily, has been prevalent in vessels such as these which have generally conveyed the humble colonist to his newly-adopted home. Of what incalculable good, then, may not the erection of some refuge for the destitute, or house of charity be, which shall stand ever ready with open doors to receive those who really stand in need, and with wise discrimination between the worthy and the worthless, so far as such can be attained, shall afford the needful help to the one, and do what in them lies to correct the vagrant habits and fraudulent practices of the other. Or who can foretell the immense amount of good which may result from supplying to each freight of souls which leaves a British port, to seek a distant home, the minister of God whose especial object it shall be to instruct in the principles of our faith those who perhaps have hitherto been careless about these things, but who now, for many reasons, may through the course of a long voyage be glad to avail themselves of such teaching and be peculiarly prepared to profit by it. And when such have reached their destination

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and are scattered far and wide through the colonies of the empire, how incumbent upon the Church at home to provide for these her banished children, the sacraments and means of grace which once they enjoyed in all their fulness, but from which they are now cut off. Whilst, then, it is the bounden duty, or rather privilege, of all the members of the Church to contribute towards the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts, much more is it of those who by their residence in such places have been enabled to amass a fortune, and who now, in God's good providence, have been permitted to return to their native land and to enjoy the fruits of their labours.

Nor could I imagine any thing more delightful to one so circumstanced, than to have both the will and power of perpetuating good in this the place of his former sojourn; whether he regarded the sorrows or the joys which were his portion there, the perils to which he was exposed, or the deliverances which were wrought out for him, surely to every Christian mind it would be among the first objects of his enquiry, How can I best serve a place which has so effectually served me? How can I benefit a people whose land hath so enriched me? Having partaken of their carnal *things, am not I bound to make a return of*

spiritual blessings? To one who thus feels his responsibilities, there will be no lack of opportunities of effectually serving those to whom he is thus indebted. To extend to them the Church in all its integrity, the bishop with apostolic gifts, the priest to break to them the bread of life, and the humble deacon to wait at the altar of the Lord, as well as to have an especial regard to the aged and the young, the poor and the distressed, these will be among the first objects of his care; equally solicitous too will he be that these blessings should be perpetuated among them, and therefore not only will he earnestly pray that there never may be wanting a succession of men duly qualified to serve God in the ministry of His word and sacraments, but he will help to the establishment in every colonial diocese, of a school of the prophets, wherein, through the combination of sound learning with religious education, men may be trained up, rightly to divide the Word of Truth, that they may be teachers of others also.

And thus have we pointed out some of many ways in which those who feel aright may testify their gratitude to Almighty God for the innumerable mercies, and those too of a special kind, *which He is continually pouring upon us, one &*

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time and another at another ; and yet we have used but at two or three of the many ways which we may glorify Him, and benefit our w-creatures, as he may perceive who either sees the means now employed for that purpose, the pressing wants of our poorer brethren, at home and abroad, which are as yet un-ved and daily forcing themselves upon our ation.

at, it may be asked, will not such a mode stifying our gratitude savour either of ostension, or engender a habit of self-righteous delence upon our own works ? I answer, not as it be abused. Doubtless there may be version of this as of every precept and pro- of the Bible ; but what then, I ask, would on this account lay aside that Bible and dis- rd alike both its commands and the blessed of everlasting life which is therein made vn to us through Christ Jesus ?

is not however, I think, that we have aught ar in the present day from the abuse of this , but rather from the neglect of it. We in an age when it is thought a part of wisdom, t a point of duty to question the motives of e who, amid other monuments of piety, ed temples to God exceeding magnificent,

and somewhat worthy of the service of the great King. Meanwhile we forget that

“They dreamt not of a perishable home
Who thus could build.”

Instead, then, of sympathizing with the spirit of those who Judas-like would ask, “Wherefore is this waste?” rather let us determine with good king David not to offer burnt-offerings to the Lord of that which costs us nothing; and may the testimony borne to the devotion of her who came beforehand to anoint the Saviour’s body to the burying, be ours, “she hath done what she could.”

“Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more.”

Not to recapitulate the remarks which were offered you on St. Barnabas’ day; remarks which bear so fully upon the sacred duty of alms-giving, and which are so well calculated to guard from error on the right hand and on the left; I would only in conclusion, endeavour to impress upon your minds the important consideration that whatever we do in the way of relieving either the temporal or spiritual wants of others should be done because they belong to Christ. As fellow-members of *His* mystical body they have a claim upon our

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regard and assistance, and as such we are bound by the most endearing bond and affecting obligation to do what in us lies to promote their present and everlasting good. And will these labours of love be without their reward? nay, verily! "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger and ye took Me in: naked and ye clothed Me: I was sick and ye visited Me: I was in prison and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred and fed Thee? or thirsty and gave Thee drink? when saw we Thee a stranger and took Thee in? or naked and clothed Thee? or when saw we Thee sick or in prison and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." It is the declaration of the same blessed Saviour who saith "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."

MAN ENCOMPASSED WITH BLESSINGS.

AND now, thou heir of sin and woe,
Come forth, and see this blue-roof'd hall !
From Heaven above, from earth below,
What varied blessings rise and fall !
While through the opening gates of morn
His bounties are in silence borne,
In stillness as of Angels' wings,
Save where the bird of morn his grateful descant sings.

The night is passed, and with it gone
The wandering shapes of ill that crept
Around us, and to us unknown
Have look'd upon us while we slept,
Like dismal faces in the gloom,
Through windows of th' illumin'd room :
Some guard unseen drives them afar,
As on night's scatter'd rear breaks forth the Eastern
star.

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And now let some sweet guide be found
To lead us forth, and point abroad,
How we are on the narrow road
By cords of sweet compulsion bound.
There are on all the ties of Love
To draw us to her house above.
Though sense sees not the sacred band,
We feel there is on all a soft-constraining Hand.

It is as if through fields of air
We saw the bright-wing'd pursuivant,
Sent down by that all-seeing Care
Which hears, and answers every want.
Yea, finding answers to our needs,
While no seen form from Thee proceeds,
We feel it is Thyself that's here,
Art present to our love, art present to our fear.

The Sun Thou daily sendest forth,—
With varied blessings manifold,
To turn to verdure the dead earth,
To turn her verdure into gold,—
Seems like Thy torch to lead us on
To worlds far better than his own;
And for his Maker asks our love,
And daily doth withdraw our coldness to reprove.

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The steers that toil in furrow'd field, —
On mountain sides the waving grain,—
The vine that hangs her purple shield,—
The fatness-dropping genial rain,—
And Nature's self that finds a voice,
And all the hills which round rejoice,
With woods and verdant spots between,
All speak around our homes the steps of the Unsee

When musing on celestial things
Fairer than what we here behold,
From birds we give them buoyant wings,
And human face of fairest mould;
This wall of sense that bars us round,
Doth thus our very fancy bound:
Nor can we deem their matchless grace
To be with us unseen, but in some distant place.

Haply some new diviner sense
The spirit's portals might unbar,
And ope to us Omnipotence;
Not distant as the twinkling star,
But in such unknown radiance
As might th' immortal soul entrance,
Yet nearer than our very breath:
And what if this which opes the door of sense—
death!

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Then think of God, and walk in fear
Of all that doth thy fancy stir,
Whate'er doth meet thine eye and ear,
Look on it as His messenger :
In this bad world wherein we dwell,
Who grasp at Heaven shall find it Hell :
The sun lights up dark clouds to shew
That that which gleams most bright is but a cloud
below.

Whate'er may be Thy messenger,
His lesson will I strive to learn,
Yea, though some rudest shape he wear,
And though his voice be sad and stern ;
Yea, though he speak occasions gone,
And dread Remorse be in the tone,
Him would I cherish in Thy Name,
And for Thy sake would love, crown'd King of woe
and shame.

Fair as the shining gate of even,
Comes Virtue down the sun-pav'd road,
Bright in the panoply of Heaven,
To lead us to that calm abode ;
For this God spreads His bounties o'er,
Alike embracing rich and poor,
Blue skies above, green scenes below,
'Tis all that we might strive the better path to know.

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Thus to enlighten dull-eyed man,
He trains him through the things of sense,
The scenes of varied life to scan,
And read aright His providence ;
Home to his heart this truth to press,
He school'd him in the wilderness,
When Angels op'd the Heavenly door,
And daily rain'd below the life-supporting store.

Fair Form, that sittest on the cloud,
The image of parental love,
And from the purple-folding shroud
To earth descendest from above,
With babes enfolded in thine arms,
As sheltering them from worldly harms ;
All things are weak to speak of thee,
And figure thy fair form, divinest Charity.

How can we paint thee to our eyes ?
Thy brow is like the radiant morn,
Thy flowing robes are azure skies,
And stars the gems thy robes adorn,
The vernal cloud thy chariot fair,
The winds the steeds that chariot bear,
The hues on evening clouds that roam
Are but the radiant gate that leads unto thy home

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Thou art fair with God above,
And fairer than all things below,
And in thy light, immortal Love,
That our heart burn, our footsteps glow,—
In emulous haste our feet be shod
To love our neighbour and our God :
For action is the heart's own door,
And Affection comes, and gathers in her store.

THE BAPTISTERY.

COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity; that we may obtain that which Thou dost promise; make us to love that which Thou dost command; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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The Ember Season.

PROPER LESSONS : *Morning*, Jer. xxxv. ; *Evening*, Jer. xxxvi.

EPISTLE, Gal. vi. 11. GOSPEL, St. Matt. vi. 24.

“ BRETHREN, pray for us.” With this affectionate request of their prayers for himself, and Ivanus and Timotheus, his fellow-labourers in the Lord’s vineyard, St. Paul concludes his first epistle to the Thessalonians ; adding only his greeting to all the brethren and a charge that his epistle should be read to them all. And we find a like request in many other of his epistles. In his second epistle to these same Thessalonians, “ Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.” And to the Colossians, writing from his prison in Rome, “ Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving ;

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all: and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel, (for I am an ambassador in bonds,) that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” At his second epistle to the Church at Corinth he expresses his confidence that God, who has already delivered himself and his fellow-laborers, will continue to do so, the Corinthians “help together by prayer for them.” Lastly in his epistle to the Romans he writes thus, “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake

joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed."

We have then abundant proof that St. Paul considered the prayers of the converts needful for himself and for all those who were joined with him in the work of the ministry: that they might be strengthened by God to overcome all the evils which the craft and subtlety of the devil or man should work against them: that they might have the gift of wisdom to understand, and stout-heartedness to declare the whole counsel of God.

And it had been so in the yet earlier times of the Gospel; in the time, not of Paul the Apostle, but of Saul the persecutor. For we read in the fourth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that when Peter and John, after being examined before the council of the Jews concerning the miracle done to the lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple, returned to their own friends and told all that the chief-priests and elders had said to them, the brethren immediately prayed to God, "Now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto Thy servants that with all boldness they may speak Thy Word."

And when we look to the Prayer-book we see that our own Church, following in this, as in all other *things*, the example of the first Christians,

has taken every opportunity to remind us of the same duty.

In the daily service we are bidden to pray "that God will send down upon all bishops and curates, and all congregations committed to their charge, the healthful spirit of His grace: and, that they may truly please Him, pour upon them the continual dew of His blessing."

In the Litany "that it may please Him to illuminate all bishops, priests, and deacons with true knowledge and understanding of His Word, and that both by their preaching and living they may set it forth and shew it accordingly." And on each Sunday and Holy-day, in praying for the whole state of Christ's Church, now, as ever, militant (that is, warring against God's enemies) here on earth, we are directed thus to pray for those who are set to guide and edify it. "Give grace, O Heavenly Father, to all bishops and curates; that they may, both by their life and doctrine, set forth Thy true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer Thy Holy Sacraments."

These are to be our ordinary prayers. But at the Ember seasons, which by ancient custom have been set apart for consecrating men to the *work* of the ministry, we are bidden to raise

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our voice in still more earnest supplication. Daily in each of the Ember weeks we are to pray that God will direct aright in their choice His servants, the bishops and pastors of His flock, and that He will grant to them who shall be chosen, His grace and assistance in the holy work they have set their hand to.

This then seems a most fitting time to meditate on the duty of praying for the clergy. That cannot but be a solemn duty which the Church of Christ from the earliest times has practised and commanded. How expedient it is for the welfare of the Church in general, and for her members in particular, is the point which I wish you now to consider. And this will best appear from considering what is the office of the Christian Minister.

He who habitually prays for his spiritual guide, does by that very act constantly remind himself that they are men of like passions with himself, and compassed with like infirmities: from whom perfectness cannot be looked for, and in whom imperfection should be met with patience. This man cannot forget that if there is really any tie between himself and his pastor, beyond those mere outward rights which the law of the land gives to him to-day, and might

give to another to-morrow, it is one of unspeakable sacredness and importance: and that the consequences of it will then only appear when both stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; the one to give account, the one how he has spoken, the other how he has heard.

And do not be afraid lest, as some will be ready to tell you, a high, because a just view of the office should lead to usurpation in those who hold it. Believe rather, for it is most true, that he who most magnifies his office, not in words but in deeds; will be the very last to magnify himself: because the more deeply he feels his sacred responsibilities, the more painfully must he feel his shortcomings.

Now St. Paul, in his second epistle to the Corinthian Church, (chap. v. 20,) has given a very exact and full description of the Christian minister's office under an expressive image. "We are," he says, "ambassadors for Christ." The kings of the earth have many things to communicate to one another about the affairs of their kingdoms: but as they cannot leave their own kingdoms often, they employ other men to represent them, and these men are styled ambassadors. To them they give powers more or *less full* according to the matter in hand. Our

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Every sovereign has such representatives in almost every country in the world, and receives such from other sovereigns in return.

And the points we have to notice about ambassadors are these. First, an ambassador has no power of his own; all that he has he receives from the sovereign who appoints him. No man can make himself an ambassador: he cannot expect to be received as one, unless he has plain proof to offer that he has been appointed. And when he is appointed he cannot do otherwise than as he is ordered: he must deliver faithfully the message he is told to deliver, whether he please or displease those to whom he is sent.

Thus we see the meaning of St. Paul. Christ Jesus is the King of His Church on earth. It was His good pleasure once to visit it when He first took upon Him our flesh; but He is now ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, there to remain till at the end of the world He cometh to judge the quick and the dead. Meanwhile, as it is not His will to be any more visibly present amongst us, He appoints frail and mortal men to be His representatives to their fellows. To enable them to be such, He gives them a visible outward appoint-

ment, which is their warrant to their brethren that He has sent them: and He gives to them powers suitable to their place in His government; all have not the same power. The Apostles, for instance, and some of their immediate successors had gifts, such as that of tongues, and of working miracles, which have been since withdrawn. And as in their times there was a due subordination of offices, (for "He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers,") so is there also now. To a deacon, one of the lowest order of ministers, it is not permitted to consecrate the elements in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, though he may help to distribute them when they have been consecrated; nor may he pronounce the absolution or remission of sins; a priest, one of the second order, may do these things, but he may not appoint other ministers, this duty being reserved for the Bishop, who is of the highest order of ministers.

"And no man taketh this honour unto himself but he that is called of God as was Aaron." There must be the inward call of God's Spirit, and before a man is allowed to receive the lowest office he is solemnly asked, "*Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy*

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Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting of His glory, and the edifying of His people." But the consciousness of this call does not make a man an ambassador of Christ, unless he also receives the outward appointment in that manner in which the Church of Christ has always been used to make it. And when he has received this, then is his duty clear, "thou shalt speak My words unto them whether they will hear or whether they will forbear." And although all Christ's ministers have not equal powers entrusted to them, all are ambassadors, and to all apply the words with which St. Paul completes his description; "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God."

Repentance, faith, and obedience are the sum of Christian duty: and to produce and foster these under the blessing of God's Holy Spirit, is the office of His ministers: who must therefore declare the whole counsel of God faithfully, and in their own persons be examples of what they teach.

It is easy then to see how important it is, first, that the clergy should be rightly instructed and

able to instruct others in the Christian doctrine, and next that they should at least not contradict in their practice the teaching which they are commissioned to deliver. And I would have you consider this : that our Lord, if He had seen fit, could have communicated the knowledge of saving truth to the mind of each man immediately, without employing the services of men at all : He might have written the truths of the Gospel on the heart and conscience of each, as He has some truths of natural religion ; or He might convey them to each by a special act, as He did to St. Paul who was at once converted to believe in Him whom he was persecuting, though even he was directed to Ananias for further instruction. But the question which really concerns us, on this and all other like points, is this : what method has He seen fit to employ?

And the whole course of nature shews that He wills we should be to a very great extent dependant upon fallible men, like ourselves, for religious life and knowledge.

Who is our first teacher? our mother, or if the blessing of a mother's care be denied, some relative who takes her place. Did we not each as little children learn our prayers, our belief, our catechism, lisping them with tongues yet im-

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perfectly framed for speech, long before we could enter into their meaning? And the appointment of a set order of men, ever supplied in an uniform succession, what is it but a continuance of this same provision? Parents are teachers of religion by God's natural law, His ministers by a like, though a special appointment. And how then shall the child fare, if they who should have given him bread have given him a stone? if they who should have nourished him with wholesome food have in ignorance or carelessness fed him upon poisons? How shall the people escape delusion if their appointed teachers are themselves astray? If the blind lead the blind, what can come of it but that both fall into the ditch?

Doubtless it is a difficulty, in our present state of limited knowledge, that, in either case, punishment appears to fall upon the innocent, since the guilt of the natural or the spiritual parent is visited upon their offspring. God we know is just, and therefore what seems to be unequal here shall doubtless be set right hereafter: but the fact cannot be doubted. As the child must, and we daily see does, suffer in body and in mind the penalty of his parent's neglect, or vice, or folly, so the fault of the pastor must be,

and is, in the ordinary course of things, visited on his flock.

St. Paul foretold it would be so. "I know," said he to the Ephesian elders in his last solemn charge at parting, "I know that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." And what is still more striking, the soundness of title to their office was to be no security for their faithfulness in discharging it; for the Apostle goes on to say: "Also of your own selves" (of that number, mind, whom he had himself admitted to their charge) "shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them."

Seeing then that it is important that men receive right doctrine, that by God's own appointment they must greatly depend upon their teachers, that those teachers only can safely guide them whom God's Spirit illuminates and directs, and that the Holy Spirit is given only in answer to the prayer of faith, and is surely promised to such prayer; surely thoughtful Christians must feel how earnestly they should pray to God that He will enable His servants, the bishops and pastors of His flock, to choose instruments fitted for the Master's use, and that He will bless those who are chosen with all spiritual understanding.

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right doctrine is not the whole of the qualification necessary for an ambassador of Christ ; right to be the pattern for his flock, a living illustration of the power of that doctrine which reaches to them. This is the aim proposed by Paul to Timothy ; “ Be thou an example to the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity ;” and a aim none should have, though almost all fall short of it.

Truly, brethren, a calling like this needs abundant grace ; and if so, then is special prayer necessary, not of the minister only, but also of the people. If he who is set as an example for his flock does by his acts give the lie to his teaching, fearful indeed is his guilt, but fearful also the danger of those whom he teaches.

Of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel : therefore hear the word at the mouth and give them warning from Me.

I say, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand.

Sin ever looks for encouragement to fellowship ; and what can more readily reach the conscience of the people than the bad

examples of their appointed guides? True it is that the Sacraments lose not their virtue by reason of the fault of the minister, but is it in human nature not to be discouraged by it? What is the sentence of Holy Scripture against the sons of Eli for their extortion and uncleanness? "The sin of the young men was very great; for men abhorred the offering of the Lord."

But it is not vice only in the minister of God which will grievously harm his flock: on open vice there are so many checks, that cases of this kind will always be rare, though when they do happen they may justly be regarded as the most terrible proof of the corruptness of the human heart; yet if he be deficient in energy and in faithful testifying for God, sinners will only too readily rest contented with conduct which gives them no alarm: they will only too readily approve a guide who suffers them to walk quietly along the broad way to destruction, and float easily down the still, but rapid, current of unconscious and unrepented sin. Not ancient Israel only, but the carnal of all ages cry, "Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceit." Herein, as in many other points, the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. The man who *is entrusted* with temporal interests is watched

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ully enough : no fear lest remissness on his
be overlooked or disregarded : but in this
er it is the faithful discharge of his duty
h will often bring ill-will on the pastor, while
mporising leniency to sin and worldliness
generate a hollow and worthless popularity.

besides unfaithfulness in his ministry, there
many deficiencies of character which might
mentioned, which must greatly hinder the
tification of his flock.

is abundantly plain, then, that Christian con-
ations are most deeply interested in the
acter of those who shall be set over them :
so a sense of their own interest alone might
them thankfully to use the prayer provided
hem.

ut there is another call upon them of a less
sh nature. Considering how fearfully respon-
is the position of Christian ministers, surely
ity should lend a fervency and depth to
er on their behalf.

f, striving yourselves after heavenly things,
feel daily how earthly things weigh you
n, how the corruption of your nature ever
ls, and evil passions war against the soul,
k, brethren, what a part is his who with all
e *enemies within* is burthened with the care

of other men's souls, and join your prayers to his for the special grace of the Holy Spirit upon him.

St. Paul desired the prayers of his flock, for he feared lest after he had preached to others, he might be himself a castaway: he feared lest danger or tribulation might bind his tongue, and make him timid in his Master's cause: if he could thus fear, what shall we do now?

If he feared, who was a chosen vessel to bear God's Name among the Gentiles, supernaturally instructed and guided; who had proved and hardened the temper of his faith by abundant labours and hardships for Christ's sake; what shall we do who live in a time where there is no truth so sacred, but it is made a matter of irreverent disputing; we who, freed from the danger of persecution, have lost its bracing and strengthening power, and are encompassed with an atmosphere of secularity and self-indulgence, tempted by the ease and quiet of calm domestic tranquillity? If he feared who so spake that a great multitude of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed, what shall we do now who too often like the weary fishers on the lake of Gennesareth toil all night, yet take nothing, and are well-nigh ready to faint as we remem-

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It may be our own unworthiness which hinders God's work?

At to St. Paul a time came, when by the vouchsafed to him (and which of us shall that portion of it the prayers of his people from heaven?) he could rejoice in the effect of his approaching change though it should be through a violent death. "I am now to be offered, and the time of my departure hand. I have fought a good fight, I have ended my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, give me at that day."

What a change is here! no more doubt, no anxiety; through a day of cloud and when he had waited in patient and untiring and in the evening time there was light, day, clear, and undying. And so too, doubtless has the grace of God in all ages so strengthened many a true servant of Christ, that meeting upon these things, and giving themselves wholly to them, their profiting has appeared to all men: that taking heed to themselves, to the doctrine, and continuing in them, have both saved themselves and those that follow them.

Pray then, brethren, from the very ground of the heart for divine light and blessing on all Christ's ministers, not specially on your own: pray not in the congregation only, but each in his secret chamber. Those slender streams of prayer, springing men know not how or when, shall unite as they flow on towards the fathomless depths of God's counsels, and shall swell into a mighty river to bless and to make glad the city of God.

Never was there greater need to pray that God would send forth labourers into His harvest. At home we have an overgrown population sunk in heathenism; abroad, neglected colonies calling to their unnatural mother-land for light from her altar-fire, kindled in old time by the zeal of Christian missionaries, yet even here but carelessly tended and burning dimly. And what is in sad truth the answer? "This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy, for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth." Yet with the heart-stricken Hezekiah let us seek the Temple, there to display before our God the page defiled with the reproach and blasphemy of His enemies. It may yet be that the Lord will reprove the words which He hath heard: therefore let us

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lift up our prayer for the remnant that is left.

Pray then for Christ's ministers in all lands ; for those who have forsaken country, and home, and kindred to preach salvation to the heathen ; for those who toil in the dense abodes of vice and misery in our own great cities : pray for those who have grown grey in His service, for those who with trembling hope and with chastened spirit stand even now on the threshold of His courts ; pray for all, that they may faithfully witness for God in their teaching and in their lives, and may so execute the high commission which they hold, that at the coming of their Lord they be not ashamed, but with the many whom they shall have turned to righteousness enter into His rest.

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father,
hast purchased to Thyself an uni
Church by the precious blood of Thy dear
mercifully look upon the same, and at this
so guide and govern the minds of Thy sei
the bishops and pastors of Thy flock, that
may lay hands suddenly on no man, but
fully and wisely make choice of fit perso
serve in the sacred ministry of Thy Ch
And to those which shall be ordained to
holy function give Thy grace and heavenly
diction; that both by their life and do
they may set forth Thy glory, and set for
the salvation of all men; through Jesus C
our Lord. Amen.

acts for the Christian Seasons.

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The Resurrection of the Widow's Son.

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, Ezekiel ii. ; *Evening*, Ezekiel xiii.

EPistle, Eph. iii. 18. GOSPEL, St. Luke vii. 11.

BEFORE our Saviour died and rose again He wed forth the power of His resurrection ; He bade many who had passed through the ey of the shadow of death to awake, to rise," to "come forth" from their graves. word was with power. The dead to whom spake heard the voice of Christ and lived.

Now it is important to observe that this mar-ous power of raising the dead was exercised y in the case of the good and innocent ; thus, ing persons who had died unstained by the ld, in the freshness of their innocence, or h as had walked with God in their riper rs, were chosen to become spectacles to the ld of the powers of Christ. Not one who l lived and died in sin, not one who had en himself to work iniquity, or had perished in an's net, was raised from the grave. The

ungodly in no case were called to hear the irresistible and quickening voice of Christ. Those that had subjected themselves to Satan's rule were left in their master's hand.

And this conduct of our Lord, if reverently and rightly viewed, will be found to spring from the exercise of the most deep and wise compassion. As He came to purify the world and to turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, surely He would have marred that work of spiritual purification, if he had opened the sepulchres of ungodly men and brought back the evil again to do their works of evil, again to taint the place from which they had been snatched, with the renewed and corrupting influences of an evil life. It was far more merciful to mankind at large, to let the ungodly abide in their torments after they had had their full space for repentance and great long-suffering, than to call them back to work mischief as of old, which would be no less a thing than mixing with His own hand some portion of the bad leaven in the lump again after it had been separated and cast out.

The resurrections of evil men would also have in this way increased the difficulty of believing in Christ, and hindered in no slight degree the

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advancement of the saving doctrine of our Lord. For if as it was, He was charged with doing His mighty works, not by His own divine power seated in Himself, but through Beelzebub the prince of the devils, would He not have strengthened the might of that blasphemous charge, had He brought back Satan's servants and Satan's ministers to corrupt the world afresh with their master's devices? "Is this," men would have said, "the lover of the pure, the cleanser and the healer of nations, the hater of iniquity, who is even calling the wicked out of their tombs and crowding the earth again with the impure, and the drunken, the swearers, the covetous and the corrupt? Is it not enough to have the tales of such men's lives once told? Are we to have a twice told tale, a pestilential repetition of their sins?" Hence then we see the love of Christ in that He raised the good, not the evil, when He was minded to shew the great truth of the resurrection; for thus that truth was visibly set forth without hindering the work either of purity or of faith. Those He raised were all the more likely to renew in their second span of life the godliness of their former course, and while they were wonders to their neighbours, looked upon as marvellous instances of resurrec-

tion, their mouths were likely to sound with the praises of Christ, their lives to shew forth the beauty of holiness, and their confession of Christ to attract their friends to a like confession.

We know from Holy Scripture that Lazarus became an object of great and natural interest; multitudes flocked with eager desire actually to see one who had been dead but was alive again. When then they came to the devout, holy Lazarus, the man of guileless mind and guileless life, must it not have turned their minds toward a confession of Him whom Lazarus confessed, as they beheld a pattern of purity; one speaking of Jesus with all the ardour of devout and overflowing love? Different indeed would have been the issue had they flocked to the house of a blasphemer; and while they were beholding with great awe the fact and mystery of a resurrection, had heard profane conversation or seen evil actions, and listened to the discourses of a corrupt and filthy mind.

But will it be so, my friends, at the second coming of the Lord? When His voice again sounds, will the good only and the faithful hear His voice, and "come forth?" Will the trumpet of the archangel pierce only the ears of the

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devout, and the power of Christ quicken only the mortal bodies of the saints? Will the evil and the thoughtless who minded earthly things, and were worldly in their lives sleep on in their cold chambers of death with deaf ears, unable to catch that trumpet, which will sound from one end of the earth to the other? Will, in short, the good alone start up and break their way through the earth and be borne into the glorious presence of Christ with the power of recovered life, while the evil go on unmoved, unquickenened, buried in an eternal sleep, uncalled, unsummoned by the Lord of life? Not so will it be at the end of the world; "the dead, small and great," the dead, pure and impure, those who went down to their graves stained and steeped in sin, and those who fell asleep in Christ laden with the treasures of faith and pure living, will alike break the clods of the valley beneath which their bodies rest. The whole world of the dead from the first of the sons of Adam to the last of his heirs that shall feel the power of death, will start up and wake and rise to meet the Lord in the air. The trumpet shall sound, the last trump, as it is called; "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," suddenly, the dead shall be raised. He

of whom we have so often heard and read, He whose Name has been in our ears and on our tongues from our very youth, the Lord Jesus Christ, will call and all will hear His voice; it will be an irresistible call; it will waken the mouldering bones of those who have been ever so long dead; none so far but what they must hear, none past hearing, multitudes upon multitudes, millions upon millions, Jew and Greek, bond and free, Christians and Gentiles, all will be constrained to come forth. The consecrated spaces around our Houses of Prayer, now so peaceful, now so still, will then yield the sleepers who are resting in their earthly beds; all will be life, all motion there.

And who can think earnestly of the resurrection as a sober and real truth without great natural awe? And yet how different will be the fear of the holy and the impure, of the true disciples of Christ crucified and the false! Though some natural dread may fill even the spirits of the saints as they come forth, they will be comforted with the glorious hope of receiving the recompense of faith, and of beholding the Saviour whom they loved and served; the consciousness of having walked as *children* of God, the remembrance of a well-

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spent holy life will then sustain and cheer their spirits as they feel themselves borne upward to behold the wonderful things of God and approach the full brightness of His presence. And not only will they have a good hope of pardon and acceptance with the Father for Christ's sake, to strengthen them in that strange and mysterious day, but the Spirit of grace, the Holy Ghost the Comforter, will doubtless come to their succour, that they be not overawed by the first sight of the glory of the Divine Majesty. As they draw near to God with their risen bodies they will doubtless be sustained by that good Spirit whose guidance they loved to follow in their earthly life, and having made the Lord their guide unto death, His grace will be sufficient for them not only in the hour of death but in the day of judgment.

But alas! what shall we say of the wicked, when the time so often spoken of on earth, has actually come, when Jesus and the resurrection so often preached in their listless ears are actually seen, when their bodies which were without suffering in the grave suddenly become alive, and they feel that that recovered life is given them only that they may suffer! None can tell, no *tongue of man*, the agonies that will

crowd and rush into the amazed souls of evil men when hell as a real thing is about to be revealed, the throne of judgment actually set, the Great Judge, their once despised Saviour just opening the books of life, about to rehearse their former deeds, and no place for them to flee unto, no possibility of escape, no mountains to fall on them, no hills to cover them, no quiet graves to shelter them, no waters of the sea to flow over them. It will be indeed a horrible dread that will overwhelm them, a most intolerable fear, when the awful trump quickens their fleshly frame and all their sins are stunning them, and there is no Comforter, no sound of compassion, no pity, no word of mercy, to soothe them with the hope of forgiveness.

O that men would remember and realize the resurrection of the dead! O that we all pondered deeply and earnestly and solemnly on that awful sentence of the Creed often so lightly spoken as a mere form of words, "I believe in the resurrection of the body." Believe in that, do we say? really and truly believe and not prepare, not repent, not live godly in this present life, not spend our lives in prayer and watchfulness and brotherly love? that were

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ness; that is the madness which the world
worldly men commit. To die, need be
the cause of fear; but to rise again with our
lies, that is the justest cause of fear unless we
prepared. Believe in the resurrection in any
way, put it before our eyes, imagine the
come and all these intervening years past,
a vivid sense of the day of judgment, and
n, I say, we shall set ourselves with immedi-
zeal to the work of Christ, that His work of
vation may be effectual in our bodies and our
ls. It is because men speak awful truths by
, without earnestness and without thought,
ause they say, "I believe in the resurrec-
i," without stopping to realize what they
, that we see them living as though there
e no judge, no resurrection, no day of judg-
at, no place of hell. And yet all things are
tening to their end. Though the sun sets
rises as if it were ever going to set and rise,
ugh the seasons glide past in their usual
rse, as if they were moving on eternal wheels,
ie end of all things is at hand." Not only
day of our death, but the great day of re-
rection, is at hand; the last generation of
akind will soon be born; the last that shall
will soon be dead; yea, these words that I

now speak will soon be found true. We shall all have gone, first one, then the other, minister and people, old and young, high and low; we are already going one by one; this may be the last Sabbath, which some who are alive to-day may be suffered to enjoy.

If we have eyes to see and ears to hear, we may see and hear how near our end is. Only look at our own neighbourhood, at the parish in which we live; see how busy death has been and is amongst us; see how many of our neighbours have been removed from their place; from how many homes have we seen funerals go forth; how many mourners have wept over the dead; how many graves have been opened in our churchyard; how many whom we were wont to know in past years are now no longer here, except as regards the mortal bodies which sleep in dust; how many once-accustomed faces have ceased to be seen in our streets, or in our fields. Sometimes we have seen some poor widow, like her of whom we have read in the gospel of the day, following her child to the grave, sometimes children following their parent, sometimes the old, sometimes the young laid in their tomb, and sometimes those who were in the very strength and vigour of mid-day life. The world is passing away; our time is

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ort; the end draweth near; we are going
nce like the shadow that departeth; we have
t long to live; our flesh is not brass, nor our
nbs iron; we all do fade as the leaf; year after
ar moves on, and steals away our strength;
e distance between us and death is lessening
st; a few paces more and we shall be gone,
e tale will be told, the sun set, the day of
rthly labour closed, the time of trial at an
d.

Soon, very soon will the race be run; we have
t to the autumn of the world; the world is
rewn with leaves, strewn with the mortal bodies
millions of men who once flourished upon it;
e year wanes; the last day comes on apace;
hat is there left now but the remnant of the
y of grace?

Rouse yourselves then, my friends, to the
eat work of preparing yourselves for the great
y of resurrection. Let not that day come upon
u unawares; look forward to it, prepare for it;
ways remember the truth of the resurrection;
ve not the world nor any worldly thing; you
e but lodgers here; there is no home, no
ttled habitation here; you have one chief work
do, that is, to prepare to meet your God, to
ek after holiness, to use God's gifts of grace,



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One Body.

OFFER LESSONS: *Morning*, Ezek. xiv. ; *Evening*, Ezek. xviii.

EPISTLE, Eph. iv. 1. GOSPEL, St. Luke xiv. 1.

NEVER a child is brought to the font for baptism, as soon as the water has been poured over it, and the sacred words pronounced, the sign of the cross made upon its forehead, the priest offers up a prayer of thanksgiving to Almighty God, that He hath been pleased to incorporate the child into His holy Church. In catechism, the first lesson that as Christians we learn, is, that we have been made members of Christ." And in our continually increasing worship, which we offer to God in the use of Prayer through the merits of our Jesus Christ, the constant faith, which indeed we confess, is that we believe "in one, holy, and Apostolic Church," "in the Holy Catholic Church." It must then be a great and important doctrine, which is thus repeatedly taught, *and which* we begin so early to learn.

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It is certainly a doctrine of which much account is made in Holy Scripture, where we are always finding this or that duty urged upon the ground, that Christians are members one of another. Now this subject is very beautifully and affectionately brought before us in the Epistle for this week, and we shall do well to consider it more attentively, if only God the Holy Ghost, that One Spirit, who animates with life and breath, and health and power, the one body of Christ, teach our heart and enlighten our understanding, which for you, reader, and for myself I pray that He may do.

“There is one body.” Every one knows what is meant, when a number of persons, banded together by some common tie, and united for some common purpose, are called a body of men. Now earthly things are indeed only a very feeble representation of things spiritual and heavenly but yet they will help us to understand the same. Our Lord Jesus Christ then has founded upon earth a society or fellowship of men and women knit together by the strongest of all bands, united for the most glorious of all purposes, this society is called the body of Christ. *Is such a society called a body? Surely*

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among other reasons ; because it may be
ned to our human bodies, which have many
erent members or limbs, each having its own
uliar work, and yet all forming part of but
compact whole, ruled and directed according
he will and desire of the one soul, which
e is in each of us. And so likewise is it with
body of Christ. It is composed of many men
women, each of them members of Christ :
e are belonging to its society kings and sub-
s, priests and people, learned and ignorant,
and young, rich and poor : and yet none of
n are separate from the others, but all are
ibers one of another. Hear how St. Paul
vs us this truth ; (1 Cor. xii.) “ As the body
ne, and hath many members, and all the
ibers of that one body, being many, are one
r, so also is Christ. For the body is
one member, but many. If the foot shall
Because I am not the hand, I am not of the
r ; is it therefore not of the body ? And if
ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I
not of the body ; is it therefore not of the
? If they were all one member,
e were the body ? But now are they many
bers, yet but one body. And the eye can-
ay *unto the hand*, I have no need of thee :

nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

Again: this body of Christ is called the Church. This is seen in several texts of Holy Scripture. Thus in Coloss. i., St. Paul is speaking of God's "dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of our sins, who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." And then (verse 18) he goes on further to say of our blessed Lord, that "He is the Head of the body, the Church." And a little afterwards he speaks equally plainly, (verse 24,) I fill up "the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His body's sake, which is the Church." The body of Christ therefore is the Church. Once more in Ephesians i. 22, 23, we read, that God hath put all things under the feet of Christ, "and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." It follows therefore again that the body of Christ and the Church mean one and the same thing, even that body of men and women in the world, united by one faith, believing in one Lord, baptized by one Spirit, *obedient to one law, animated by one common*

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we of eternal happiness in the world to come, through Him, their Head, who died and who rose again. "There is one body," says the apostle; that is to say, there is one Church, one society or fellowship of Christian people, so united together that they may be compared to many members of one body. Not a mere collection of various denominations, like so many stones in a stone heap, which have no further connection with each other than the accident of their lying together for the time being in a certain confused and disorderly manner, but rather like the hewn stones in a great building, the walls whereof are bonded together by the corner-stone, and rest upon solid foundations, and every stone of which has its proper place in the construction of the whole. It is not a society of people, that its members are naturally parts of the whole, as much as the hand or foot, the eye or the ear are parts of a whole body. And so all must act together, and all must act in subordination to each other. They have not each separate interests, but it is the one interest of the whole body, which must engage each. They have not divided wills, but must be guided by the will and mind which rules the whole body. One cannot suffer,

which is the Church. There is one Bo
there is one Spirit.

Thus much then seems plain from th
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and that, as there is but one Lord and
as there is but one name given under
whereby we may be saved, even the N
Christ, so there can be but one such
one such body, one Church. There is
Church of the Christians, by which th
get to heaven; and the church of the
medans in which God accepts them.

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n, going out into all the world, we are
deavour to bring all those who have not
known the Gospel. They at least acknow-
: this truth, who never meet together on a
ay morning without saying, "I believe in
Catholic and Apostolic Church."

it further : before we can use this doctrine
ically, there is yet another question for us
etermine. Is this society of men and wo-

which is called in Scripture the body or
ch of Christ, a communion of truly holy,
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s hearts? or is it a visible order of men,
l out of the world, and known to their
v-men by certain visible marks and signs ;
ciety which can be pointed to, which we
cannot read the secrets of the soul, can yet
at with our bodily eyes? Is the Church of
st on earth composed merely and simply
ose hidden saints of God, who shall in the
vercome, and receive the crown of life? or
composed of many, some good, some bad,
f them intended for salvation, if they live
ding to Christ's rules, but not all of them
e of salvation, because all of them will not

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so live ; a mighty drag-net cast out into the sea of human souls, and taking within its meshes fishes both good and bad ? Can men see the Church of Christ on earth, or can they not ? Is it visible or invisible ?

Now, taking the Bible as our guide, we must answer that the Church of Christ may be seen. It is a society of men, notoriously existing in the world, and as plain to the eyes of all, as any other society, which can be known by marks and rules. It is a society, which you, reader, and myself may know whether we belong to, or whether we do not ; and concerning which we may say of our neighbour whether he belongs to it, or whether he does not. We cannot indeed say of ourselves, whether we shall certainly reach heaven or no ; because, though God is faithful, and will never forsake those who truly trust in Him, yet our own hearts are treacherous and deceitful, and we must watch and pray, as St. Paul did, lest after all we should be castaways. And still less can we judge our neighbour, and say certainly of him, whether or no he will be accepted or condemned at the Great Day of account ; because how can we read his heart, or know his secret thoughts ? God only can do *this*. But we can say of him, whether or no he

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has been called out of a sinful world to the faith of Christ, and been made a member of His body - which is the Church. We can say of him, whether or no he has been duly baptized in the name of the blessed Trinity, confesses with his lips the Christian faith, prays in the Christian Church, and kneels at the Christian altar, shewing forth the death of Christ until He come again, and receiving those visible elements of bread and wine which are the means of sustenance and support to faithful souls. Christian people can be appealed to as such by their minister; he can beseech them, because they have received the grace of being made God's children by adoption, that they receive not that grace of God in vain. He can exhort them, as St. Paul did, to various Christian duties towards each other and towards themselves, because they belong to the body of Christ, and because they know themselves to do so, and are therefore members one of another.

For how are men admitted into the Church of Christ? Call to mind St. Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, as we are told of it in Acts ii. We read that the men who heard that sermon were "pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, *what shall we do?* Then Peter said unto

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them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. . . . And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." What then can be plainer than that people are admitted into the Church of Christ by means of Baptism? Again, how do we read in 1 Cor. xii. 13, the passage of Holy Scripture to which I have before referred? "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free." So we learn from this also that men are admitted as members of Christ's body by the Sacrament of Baptism. Now this Sacrament has in it two parts, an inward grace, but an outward sign also, namely, water and the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. But that society into which men are visibly admitted must of itself be visible. Those three thousand souls, who were baptized on the day of Pentecost, *could not indeed know what should be the*

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end of the race they then commenced, but they must have known that they had been baptized; that they were from that time members of a visible society of men, set apart by Almighty God from the rest of the world for a particular purpose, having new duties to God and Christ, because they were so set apart, and new duties towards one another, admitted as probationers into a state of salvation, on their trial for eternity.

I think then that for these and many other reasons, which might easily be given, we may consider it as certain, that the Church or body of Christ is a society of men which all may see and know, and of which we may each be able to say whether or no we are members.

And now see how practical this doctrine is, and how it stirs us up to the many duties of our Christian life. When St. Paul wrote his epistles to various Christians in various parts of the world, he does not exhort them to seek to become members of Christ's body; *that* he and they knew had already been accomplished, but he exhorts them to live worthy of their calling, to see that their conversation be such as became men for whom God had done so much; and he implores them, that because they belong to *Christ's one body*, therefore they should be

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diligent in the practice of those duties and graces, which flowed immediately from that high relation. Just as one, who himself of lower rank had become connected with any noble and high-born family, might properly be exhorted to take heed that he disgraced not his new kindred.

Does St. Paul wish to warn the Corinthians against the deadly sin of fornication and uncleanness : he says to them, "know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid . . . What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" Again the same argument; You have been made members of Christ in Baptism, therefore abstain from all uncleanness.

Again, (Rom. xii. 5,) St. Paul wishes the disciples to keep down all pride and vain-glory, and warns them not to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think; and how does he press this upon them? From the fact of which they were all aware, that they were all members of the body of Christ, and therefore as the hand does not vaunt itself against the foot, nor the eye against the ear, in our natural

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bodies, but each minds its own business, so also in Christ's body; no one member should set himself against another, but each do his own work. "We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

Again, (1 Cor. xii. 25, 26,) we are not to care each one for himself, but we are to care for one another; we are not to live for ourselves only, selfishly indifferent towards every body else, but the joys and sorrows, the happiness and the pains of our fellow-Christians are to touch our own hearts also. How does St. Paul enforce this duty? Again does he appeal to the fact of the persons to whom he wrote, being members of Christ's body or Church, and notoriously knowing themselves to be such. He says, "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

Again, St. Paul, inspired by the Holy Ghost, declares how utterly sinful and unchristian is all falsehood and lying; and how does he do so? (Ephes. iv. 25.) he says, "Wherefore putting

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The merry 'matin-bells,
In their watch-tower they are swinging;
For the day is o'er the dells,
And they're singing—Christian—singing!
They have caught the morning beam
Through their ivied turret's wreath,
And the chancel-window's gleam
Is glorious beneath:
Go—Christian—go,
For the altar flameth there,
And the snowy vestments glow,
Of the presbyter at prayer!

There is morning incense flung,
From the child-like lily-flowers;
And their fragrant censer swung,
Make it ours—Christian—ours!
And hark, our Mother's hymn,
And the organ-peals we love!
They sound like cherubim
At their orisons above!
Pray—Christian—pray,
At the bonny peep of dawn,
Ere the dew-drop and the spray
That christen it, are gone!

COXE'S CHRISTIAN BALLADS.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

acts for the Christian Seasons.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Abuse of privileges.

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, Ezek. xx. ; *Evening*, Ezek. xxiv.

EPISTLE, 1 Cor. i. 4. GOSPEL, St. Matt. xxii. 34.

THE opening of the epistle from which that of day is taken, is occupied with a joyful triumphant catalogue of the overflowing gifts which Church of Corinth had received; grace so at that St. Paul thanked God always on behalf his converts; riches in every thing, in utterance, and knowledge; so that they came behind no gifts, and only waited for the coming of Christ, who meantime was confirming His Church, and making it blameless, ready for the day of the Lord Jesus.

But as the epistle advances, the tone of the epistle changes. His notes of joy die away with lamentation; for he begins indeed with the privileges of his converts, but ends with their infirmity; opens with their grace, concludes with their abuse of grace. And then he comes to this point; *he tells them plainly and with all fidelity,*

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that their gifts would avail only to their deeper condemnation, if they effected not their greater sanctification. Were they temples of the Holy Ghost? But, "if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." (1 Cor. iii. 17.) Were they partakers of Christ? But "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." (1 Cor. xi. 29.) Were they possessed of manifold gifts of the Holy Ghost? He who lacketh charity lacketh every thing. He is nothing: his gifts profit him nothing. (1 Cor. xiii.) The same sad strain rings also in our ears after hearing the two first lessons of this day. It was with the first Church as with the last: we read of great blessings, great abuses, great judgments. And therefore it is well for us to look back from the Church of Christ to the Church of Moses, as well as forward from the ancient days; for thus we see that we Christians with ten thousand-fold more blessing and grace, are yet re-acting the sins of those who lived without our light and power. O shame on us! O peril to us!

In the first chapter then, which this day draws from the prophet, from the fifth verse to the *twenty-first*, we find a list of God's blessings to

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His first Israel; His delivering them from Egypt; His bringing them into a land flowing with milk and honey; His statutes and His judgments by which they might live; His Sabbaths; His manifold long-suffering.

But for all these they had rebelled again and again; served God deceitfully; polluted His holy days; despised His judgments, and walked not in His statutes; followed them which were no gods. And feeling guilty for all this, they would have thrown off their responsibility, if it were possible, so that God was compelled to say to them, "that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, we will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone;" and so follow the judgments due to such transgressions; judgments which nearly fill the remainder of this chapter, and occupy the whole of the other, the twenty-fourth. There is one break however in the twentieth chapter, there is one streak of light behind the stormy clouds, by which punishment becomes chastisement, and despair turns into repentance. God declares that in these first sorrows His object is reformation rather than destruction; that mercy still holds the hands of justice, and directs the blow so as to spare *the life*. "I will bring you into the wilder-

ness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the Lord."

Thus at that time there was one blessed streak of light by which men might guide their steps into the way of life; at that time, but not always. These prophecies had both a speedy and a distant accomplishment. The seventy years' captivity was short; but the rejection of the Jewish nation which followed their last great iniquity is still proceeding, and for nearly eighteen hundred years has been entire. And even behind this looms a darker and more dreadful fulfilment, an endless judgment; the judgment of the impenitent, who might have been converted and would not; for them is the "blackness of darkness for ever." This is one and the same history with that of

he parable of the talents; means of good were given and neglected, and judgment slumbered not. This is that of the vineyard planted by God, fenced in, choicely planted, supplied with every thing needful, expected to be fruitful, but bringing forth wild grapes, and therefore unfenced, eaten up, trodden down, laid waste, left desolate, full of briars and thorns, under a barren sky for ever. (Isa. v.) The gifts, the trial time, the neglect, the punishment come over and over again. Everywhere we meet them, and what shall exceed the deep sadness and awful justice of that complaint; "What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it? therefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

Now herein is written the history of the Church and of her members. She and hers are represented in these things; 1. The Church. She is the new Israel; she is the vineyard; she has received talents; she possesses the glorious gifts which the Apostle attributes to the Corinthians; she was brought up out of Egypt. Her present privileges are a Canaan, a heaven on earth; for even now she is in God, and God in her; even now she has fellowship with an-

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gels, and many of the departed children behold the face of God. She has statutes, and ordinances, holy days, oracles of God, a ministry of reconciliation. She comes behind in no gift; she has utterance and knowledge. The Gospel has been confirmed in her by miracle and by grace. She waits only for the coming of the Lord, who even now confirms her, and makes her blameless for the day of our Lord Jesus Christ?

O look at her and see! Compare her state with her privileges, and judge ye! See the east divided from the west! See the west split up into yet further fragments! Behold the heathen unconverted, and the utmost parts of the earth Satan's possession, not His to whom they were given, as the reward of His priceless sufferings! In Christendom itself heathenism is springing up, perhaps faster than Christianity is spreading into pagan lands. Look at the lives of Christians which are an offence unto the unconverted; a darkness, not a light; salt without savour; a great anti-gospel preaching of hell instead of heaven. Wherever men are gathered together into great cities, instead of being an holy assembly unto the Lord, a Jerusalem, a praise of the earth, they collect all wickedness

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into one, not all grace ; all error, not all truth ; hell vomits up its soul into our towns. They are the mouth of the volcano, pouring forth the everlasting flames into men's hearts, before the time. O, the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood ! and alas for the day of vengeance !

But as we are connected with the whole Catholic Church of Christ through our own, we should behold the faults of our own Church more closely, for they are ours. We look at them not in reproach, but sorrow ; not in judgment, not with lamentation, not as superior, not as free, not as leaving her to her fate ; but as implicated ; as one with her for good and evil ; as guilty with her, and guilty against her.

In this spirit then let us look again. Let us look at our barred Churches, in which from one end of the week to the other the voice of prayer and praise is silent ; at our rare communions, and few communicants ; at our divisions, and our false doctrines ; at our fasts made feasts ; our awful profanation of the holy week, and other seasons of ministration ; at our feasts made fasts, by that hard labour in the service of the world that suffers *not* poor nor rich to raise a joyful

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service to the Lord on the day of His ascension, nor to realize the Communion of Saints by celebrating the holy days of apostles and martyrs. Look we also at our gilded palaces and our dark and loathsome alleys; at the marble domes which rise up to the sun, and the cellars in which human beings of one flesh and blood dive down into the earth and dwell in it, buried before death. Think we of the gorgeous houses which receive us as we journey, and the palaces of the clubs which collect the lonely rich, whilst up and down before them pace out-cast women dying in soul and body, who have no place of refuge, no hope here or hereafter.

It is true that the Church is aroused and is arising. It is true that hospitals and penitentiaries and schools and churches multiply, although as yet they grow not faster, if so fast, as those increase who need them. For all this we thank God; for all this we love our Church the more; cleave to her more closely; labour in her more diligently; pray more earnestly; desire more hopefully. But England as a whole still is as has been said; and the Church of England is charged with England, charged to sanctify it, to make it a praise of the earth, a nursery for heaven. Say what we will to stimulate each

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other, and to confirm men in duty, in hope, in zeal; but let us weep whilst we go forth with our precious seed, weep for the sins which defile us, weep for the judgments which await us.

Surely we must be taken out into the wilderness, that God may plead with us face to face. Surely we are in the wilderness even now. Our distractions, our chains, our sorrows are our wilderness. God is truly pleading with us.

If He pleads in vain there is yet another desert, a great howling wilderness prepared for us. Those whom God cannot convert by sorrow He subdues by suffering. When sermons, and voices of conscience, and piercing thoughts from the Word change not a sinner, then death of beloved ones, then poverty, then shame, then agony follow. If God pleads with us in vain by these present sorrows and alarms, He will take us forth, deprive us of our endowments, our Churches, our schools; it may be of our own private goods also, and of our liberty; He knoweth, but most surely He will plead with us until we know that He is the Lord.

And now what say we to ourselves the while? We have told out the sins of our Church, we have discovered her shame; and did not our hearts *say to each one of us all along*; "O

this is I. I am the guilty one. As particular Churches together make up the whole Catholic Church, so such as I constitute this Church of my Baptism. My want of prayer, my uncharitableness, my luxury, my selfishness, my undutifulness, my stinted alms, my slumbers for watching, my feasts for fasts, my indolence, my neglects, these make my beloved Church that which she is."

Thus we come home to ourselves, we come to condemn ourselves, the safest, the truest way of amendment. If we would have the whole temple sound, we the lower stones must be sound also. Poor are we and worthless, but on us rests the building. Goodly stones are laid over us, the rough and worthless stuff of the foundations. Let us see to ourselves.

The Church is as a crystal which when broken into countless pieces, yields in each the same shapes, because of that one law by which she and all her parts are formed. We too have come out of Egypt. We too have passed through waters, we have received statutes, and judgments, and holy times, and we dwell in Canaan. "Our conversation is in heaven." The talent of salvation is committed to us. Christ *has* taken us in His arms and embraced us.

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As children of God we have an ever-present Father. As inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, heaven is ever open to us. And since that blessed hour of baptism, He has given us grace on grace. He has sealed us, signing us again for His own. He has fed us with Himself, with the bread which makes immortal.

We might go on to number grace upon grace and gift upon gift; but what if it be only to write an epistle against ourselves? to begin with privileges and end with abuses? to bring in curses by blessings?

This is our trial time. May God give us grace to stand; but if not, at least to arise before that great and final rejection; may He take us into the wilderness and plead with us. If we cannot have a blessed prosperity, let us have blessed adversity, any thing, any thing but reprobation. Sorrow, sickness, shame, loss, want, fear, bitter disappointment, treacherous friends, broken hopes; welcome all, welcome every thing, but rejection. May the body be delivered "unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (1 Cor. v. 5.)

But, if possible, let such fears save us such sorrows. *These chapters, and those like them,*

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should be to us a Commination Service. God of His mercy shews the storm before it breaks, that we may escape. Nineveh was condemned, and pardoned. Ahab and Hezekiah were sentenced and received respite. Let us rise up and look fully at our position, at what we might be, and what we are; at our grace, and our practice. Let us compare our knowledge with our actions, our gifts with our holiness, our substance with our alms, our time with our prayers, our hopes with our efforts. Surely we want nothing but that which we withhold from ourselves. We may be saints; we may fulfil the privilege of those who are born again, that they sin not. If any thing fails, it is our resolution, our will to be sanctified. Up, up, each one of us to labour before the night cometh; to wait for the coming of the Lord; so that the angels of God on earth, His ministers of reconciliation, and the angels of God in heaven, our guardian spirits, may indeed thank God on our behalf for the grace of God which is given us by Jesus Christ, for talents which have been multiplied, for dews of blessing which have watered fruit unto eternal life.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

Acts for the Christian Seasons.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The truth as it is in Jesus.

PROPER LESSONS : *Morning*, Daniel iii. ; *Evening*, Daniel vi.

EPISTLE, Eph. iv. 17. GOSPEL, St. Matt. ix. 1.

PASSAGE in the Epistle for this Sunday tells us that the Lord Jesus came down from heaven to teach mankind the truth as it is in Him. We propose in the following pages to direct the reader's attention to some points connected with this holy truth ; and in doing so, we shall consider the spirit and object of the question which Pilate addressed to our Lord,—“What is Truth?” There is some doubt as to the tone of mind in which the Roman governor proposed this question to the ever-blessed Son of God, who was arraigned before him as a criminal. It might have been the enquiry of a sincere searcher after truth : or one whose heart was moved by the touching words of our blessed Saviour ; “For this cause was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth hears My voice.” These words coming from our

Lord at such a time, may have awakened Pilate a sincere desire to know something of sublime truth, of which our Saviour confessed Himself to be the divine Teacher. To this there is, however, one objection. Had Pilate really in earnest when he asked our blessed one of the deepest questions which has ever occupied the human intellect, we may reverently conclude that his enquiry would have received a sufficient answer. Our Lord was not wont to shut His ears against any who approached Him, but earnestly seeking "the way, the truth, and the life." Such persons He came into this world to look for, that He might give them consolation, and guide them to the knowledge of His truth. But in the present case, the question of the Roman governor was left unanswered. Jesus held His peace. We may therefore, I suppose, conclude, that the enquiry was not put from any real desire to receive a satisfactory answer, but was rather the emanation of a worldly, sceptical, spirit, which contemptuously regarded truth as the empty name of that which had no real existence. If Pilate evidently had a certain kindly feeling for the divine Saviour. Had he dared to follow his own inclinations, he would have saved

from the disgraceful death, the injustice of which he plainly acknowledged ; and therefore, when our Lord had observed that “every one who was of the truth heard His voice,” Pilate, in his short, hasty question, may have intended to have conveyed to Him some such expostulation as this ; “Why have you brought yourself into this trouble for the sake of such a bauble and delusion as truth, which may well enough afford matter to philosophers to dispute and reason about, but for which no man ought to be so wild as to give up his life? What is truth? Is it wise to bring one’s self into disgrace on account of something so unreal and so vain?” The clause following the question seems to bear out this explanation ; for from it we perceive that Pilate had not waited for any answer, but immediately went out again unto the Jews, and tried to persuade them to suffer the Lord Jesus to be set at liberty. “Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in Him no fault at all.”

If this be the correct view of all that was implied in this brief enquiry of Pontius Pilate, it proves that he belonged, in opinion, to that class of *philosophers* and politicians, who pub-

licly held that there was no definite truth, that every thing was matter of uncertain opinion, that it was of little consequence what a man believed; whether he believed any thing, or nothing, since there was no one, fixed, invariable, truth, and no one true mode of giving honour and worship to the supreme God. When the Christian faith first began to diffuse itself throughout the world, it had to contend against no deadlier enemies than the upholders of this theory. Christianity in fact, was more opposed to this system than it was even to the false religions which it desired to overthrow; because these false religions, the idolatrous paganism of Greece and Rome, were in some degree corruptions of primitive glimpses of the truth, and by their very professions admitted that there was some definite truth; whereas the system of which we suppose Pilate to have been a favourer, maintained that no one thing was more true than another; that truth was in fact a mere name without substance, and that all religions were equally true, or equally false, according to the sincerity of their supporters. Of course, no exception was made in favour of the Christian religion. These persons put it in the same *rank* with all other religions, and would by no

means admit its claim to be the sole depository of the truth, the divinely commissioned Teacher of the world, the sole appointed Instructor of the ignorant, the Light of those that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Hence you will readily believe that the most unrelenting persecutors of the Church arose from the upholders of the theory I have alluded to. They thought themselves much more enlightened than the Christians, and they esteemed it more rational to admit that every one could be right or wrong at the same time, however discordant their opinions might be, than to hold that there is only one right way, and only one plain and tangible truth.

Although the Christian faith triumphed over this formidable adversary, it did not so gain the victory as to extinguish completely the vanquished enemy. After a sleep of many centuries the same theory has now arisen again, and is spreading itself over the world in a slightly altered, although a much more dangerous form. The tone of mind which prompted Pilate to say with scorn, "What is truth?" is, alas, far from being extinct. But it now usually hides its real deformity under the mask of *benevolence and love*, and pretends to be the real

friend of religion, although it is, in fact, its greatest enemy. The form which this system has assumed at the present day is the following. It professes, generally, although not always, to hold that the Christian religion is the true religion, which every one ought to confess. But when you come to ask what is the Christian religion, you are told that it is a religion of peace and charity, a religion of universal love, which looks upon all men as brothers, and desires to embrace all men as members one of another. All this seems very plausible, and impossible to be cavilled at. Our holy religion is indeed a religion of brotherly love; it regards all men as the offspring of God, and it desires that all should be enrolled in one body, as members one of another. However, we must not be satisfied with every system which is content to praise the Christian religion as one of universal love. In truth this mode of speaking is so very common at present, and so very popular with the world, that to those who remember, that the world ever has been, and ever will be, the enemy of Christ, it is enough to create suspicion, that all is not right; and that this benevolent mode of speaking is ostentatiously *put forward*, in order to cover some grave seri-

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ous defect in the system. And you will at once find out what that defect is, if you ask two other questions. First, in the religion of Jesus Christ, is any thing else required besides love and peace, in order to make a man a true Christian? And secondly, granting universal brotherhood to be a great principle of the Christian religion, on what is this brotherhood to be founded? How is it to be cemented together? Does it imply that its members agree with one another in opinion, speak the same thing and believe the same faith? The answer to these questions will be evaded, or given in some shuffling way. It will be admitted, that in addition to love, a man, to be a Christian, must be moral in his life; he must not swear, nor steal, nor be impure. And that as to agreement with one another, it is very well that they should agree in opinion as far as possible, and that every man should be sincere in what he believes. But you must not be satisfied with these vague admissions. You must press the point more closely, and ask this direct question; in addition to love and to good morals, and to general agreement in opinion as far as is possible, and to sincerity, are there, or are there not, certain *definite doctrines* which a man must believe;

and are there, or are there not, certain sacraments which a man must receive, before he can be enrolled into that universal brotherhood, which the Christian religion was confessedly designed to become? This question will bring out at once into clear light the deadly error of the principles to which I am alluding. The professors of those principles must at last be obliged to answer, that a man may be a Christian without believing definite doctrines, and without admitting the necessity of particular sacraments. That is; a belief in one fixed doctrine, or truth, is not necessary in order to constitute a real Christian. So that according to this system, the man who denies the doctrine of the Trinity and of the atonement, is as much a Christian as the man who believes them to be true; and the man who repudiates sacraments altogether, is equally a member of Christ's mystical body, with him who believes that those sacraments are the divine instruments by which he is engrafted into that body! What is all this except a very subtle way of insinuating that there is no such thing as definite abstract truth, and that the Christian religion is a religion of morals and of love, not a religion of belief in the same eternal, unchangeable,

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truths? Every one can see that the man who holds this view of the Christian religion may differ in words from Pontius Pilate, and minds of the same order in his age, but does not differ in reality. There is at bottom the same secret scepticism, the same unbelief in the existence of truth, as an unchangeable, eternal, reality. How any persons could persuade themselves that the Lord Jesus considers it a matter of indifference what a man professes to believe, appears to me almost unaccountable; neither reason, nor Scripture, nor the testimony of the Church, nor the tenor of history, will bear him out in his supposition. By the very words, "religion of Jesus Christ," it is implied, that our Lord came down from heaven to teach His servants certain lessons which they did not know before. Every religion, in order to be a religion, must inculcate certain dogmata, or doctrines, upon its disciples, as the necessary condition of their being received into fellowship. And the difference between false religions and the true religion, is not, that the latter is a mere system of good morals and general benvolence, including within its pale all conceivable diversities of belief; but it is this; that while all false religions inculcate false, or *erroneous*, the true religion sets forth the true

dogmata, (i. e. doctrines and opinions,) in opposition to the others, and with the express desire of banishing them for ever from the minds and affections of men. Deeply rooted in the heart of man, is an invincible yearning after truth. In the brief days of his innocency, man walked at large in the full light of eternal truth. Falsehood, error, prejudice, mistake, was unknown to him ; O happy had he never learned them ! But with the fall, the light of truth became obscured, and darkness by degrees crept over the human family. Deceived by Satan and their own evil hearts, they “ changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is over all, God blessed for ever.” Having lost the truth, they began to grope about for it, if haply they might find it. This is the origin of all false religions. They are all so many attempts of degraded and corrupted man to discover that beautiful and everlasting truth, which made so deep an impression upon the human heart, that even in the midst of sin and corruption, the recollection of it would awaken a strong and an earnest desire to regain it. The Almighty watched the growth of this desire, incited, fostered, directed, and at last resolved to gratify it. That truth which man could

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never discover by his own unaided powers, He revealed through His only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. From Him Who is the Truth, we derive the knowledge of truth. He has taught us the real nature of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He has taught us to see the greatness of human wickedness, and the absolute necessity of an all-perfect atonement. He has taught us to recognise that atonement in Himself dying for us upon the Cross. He has taught us, that in that Cross and passion is the medicine for the healing of all the diseases of our souls. He has taught us that He Himself, our Sacrifice and our Atonement, is not God alone, nor Man alone, but is God and Man in one person, true God, and yet true Man. Further, He has founded a visible Church on earth, to be the pillar and ground of the truth, and the home of that universal brotherhood, which He truly wished to propagate on earth. And in this Church He hath appointed certain officers, "apostles, prophets, teachers," "bishops, priests, deacons," whose direct commission it is "to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad." They are sent into all nations to propose unto all men one system of

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belief, to propose belief in the eternal judgment, in the resurrection of the body, in the unity of the Church, in the Cross and passion of Lord Jesus Christ, in His resurrection and ascension, in His incarnation, and in the triune nature of the Almighty as three Persons in One God. Those that receive this faith are received into the universal brotherhood of Christian people, by the instrument of a sacrament. They are baptized, not into a mere code of morals, not into a loose association of discordant opinions, but into this firm and definite faith. They who reject this faith do not believe it to be true, are not admitted into Christian brotherhood. Whatever they may call themselves, they put the reality far from them.

I feel sure, that this is a correct account of the primary principles of the religion of Christ. It is a religion which came to supplant all other religions: and to supplant the teaching what they could not teach, in the truth. Its first admonition to all men is to believe; but it is not satisfied with this, it tells them also what they are to believe. I find them in no uncertainty upon this important point. It is not contented with mere si-

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It does not allow one man to believe one thing, and another man the direct opposite, and then say, that this difference of belief is of no consequence whatever. On the contrary, it proposes to every man's faith, certain definite, invariable doctrines. It asks this solemn question, "wilt thou be baptized in this faith?" It calls this faith, a "faith once for all delivered to the saints;" a sacred deposit and trust, to be jealously guarded, and carefully transmitted from generation to generation. And it maintains that this faith, thus taught, thus received, thus handed on from father to son, from age to age, is the one immutable truth of God, after which man's heart is always yearning; which alone can give us real liberty, alone can make us meet to be sanctified by Him who is expressly called the Spirit of Truth.

If then, in the religion of Jesus Christ, God hath revealed to us the one truth, after which man long had groped in vain, and if faith be the foundation of that religion, it follows, that it is of the first importance to us all to receive and believe the truth. If a man say to us, it matters not what you believe, he either does not really understand his own words, or he is (unconsciously *perhaps*) undermining the faith. If

another say to us, that the religion of Jesus Christ is sincerity and love, and that all formal enunciations of doctrine, all creeds and sacraments are the addition of men, he is describing a religion of his own invention, and not that which is founded in the blood of the Cross. That which our Lord has revealed says to all men, Believe; and it does not leave them in the dark as to what to believe, but illuminating their minds and purifying their hearts, it commits to them the faith and leads them on to the full knowledge of the truth. Then it adds, Do thou magnify this faith in the eyes of men, walk worthily of it; "be kindly affectionate one to another," "love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." Belief in the truth and love must always go together, and cannot be disjointed, for "charity rejoiceth in the truth."

In the present day, we are exposed to the temptation of dealing unfaithfully with the sacred truth into which we were baptized. The miserable divisions of Christendom make men long for a termination to the disputes which agitate the Christian world; and to minds of a certain order, it seems the easiest course to cut the knot, by maintaining that all distinctive *doctrines* are matters of indifference, and that

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There is no one invariable truth. - This is, in itself, to sacrifice all faith and all truth for mere worldly ends. It is a most false step, and one which cannot accomplish the object it proposes. For there can be no real union without real agreement in matters of faith. Most unhappy are the existing separations and diversities of doctrine! They have done more injury to the name of Christ than words could describe. They have impeded the extension of God's kingdom. They have gained many souls for Satan and his angels. It is right that their existence should be to all true Christians a deep source of grief and sorrow. But if we would help towards healing these schisms, there is open to us at least one safe course of action. Let us pray,—pray for the peace of Jerusalem, say “that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth.” And let us win men to the truth by consistency, gentleness, and holiness of life. This will, in the end, be more successful than any compromise with error at the expense of truth. Let us not be beguiled by plausible words: and because love is the end of religion, forget that belief in the truth is its foundation. This is a line of duty most clearly marked out for

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us. May we have strength to adhere to it ; and whatever be the result, we at least shall not be confounded before God at the great judgment day ; but when He then demandeth from us an account of our stewardship, we may have boldness to confess, that in an evil generation, by the aid of His Holy Spirit and His dear Son, through good report and evil report, we "kept the faith," having been "taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus."

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Watchfulness.

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, Joel ii. ; *Evening*, Micah vi.
EPISTLE, Eph. v. 15. GOSPEL, St. Matt. xxii. 1.

OUR spiritual life is compared in Scripture to our bodily life. Thus when we do that which is good we are said to “walk after the Spirit,” and when we do that which is evil to “walk” after the flesh. He who obeys the Gospel, and lives holily, and prepares himself for Christ’s coming, and frames his daily life by the rule of the Cross, and resists sin through the Spirit, and has God in all his thoughts, and abounds in love both to God and man, such an one is said to “walk with God,” as though God were at his side, as though they were moving together along the same road, God leading and he following; as a child walks with his father and is led by him, and they go on hand in hand, so is the child of God said to be led by God; and as the father is somewhat before the child and leads the way, so the Spirit is said to go before the

his guide is God, but he cannot see Him nor touch the hem of His garment, nor has He Him as a child does on his father's hand; he walks as seeing Him who is invisible; he feels His presence, he is conscious that the Lord is with him and he with the Lord. As a man throws himself with all trustfulness in his friend's power, so the believer, though he sees nothing more than other men see, by a special discernment lays hold of the law of the Gospel as though it were the visible hand of God. He seeks holiness; he watches against sin; he subdues his unruly will; he considers not his pleasure; he daily denies himself; he walks the course of holy living, believing that

is meant when a man is said to "walk after the Spirit," or to "walk after the flesh," or to "walk with God," or to "walk by faith;" we see that the motions of the body represent in a plain and easy way the motions of the soul, whether towards heaven or towards hell.

St. Paul, speaking by the Spirit, frequently adopts this figure of speech; in his Epistle to the Ephesians he says, "walk not, as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds, having their understanding darkened;" and then in the next chapter, "walk in love, as Christ has loved us;" and then comes the text, "see that ye walk circumspectly; not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." "See," he says, "that ye walk circumspectly;" look to it; take heed of it; be careful to do it; I beseech you to consider; look and see; plunge not forward any how, without circumspection; see your need of circumspection, of great care, of immediate and instant care. I have already told you not to walk as the Gentiles, I have exhorted you further still to walk in love; such care have I for your souls that I must add yet another word to all these, "see that ye walk circumspectly." What he bids us do we need to do; *and he had need to press that point*

upon all the members of Christ's Church that they should watch their steps, lest they be separated from Christ and walk after the world.

Walk we must, one way or other ; that is not the point ; but how shall we walk, this is the thing to be cared for by immortal souls ; walk, I say, we must ; all our life is motion ; stage after stage, day after day ; time carries us on ; we cannot stop ; every thing moves ; there is no continuing stay. But there is often wrong motion ; there is careless walking, unstable steps ; there is advancement on the wrong road, even on the road of death ; there is moving to and fro, from this side to that, now serving the world a little, now Christ ; there is idling, there is carelessness in the choice of our path ; some men are in no care whither they are going ; they let life slip by without heeding whether it be to heaven or to hell that they are journeying. "See then that ye walk circumspectly," is good counsel for us at this time, before time has gone, before any further waste of life. Yea, God's words that come from His mouth, are like the works that come from His hands, "very good ;" these words are good, and are for our good, if they be well weighed and listened to by *the ears of an attentive soul.* It is time that

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we should look about us and see where we are, and whither we are going, and what we have to amend in our way ; for "the time is short," and we must not be content simply to get through life and to live for the day. This life is but for once ; this road can but once be trodden ; once let us die and we may look back, and repent, and weep, and open our eyes to our great waste of this short life ; but that sorrow will be a consuming and a fruitless sorrow. All these common ordinary days are most awful and precious gifts, each with its own great responsibilities ; present actions are eternal in their results. When we lie down to-night, this sabbath will have brought us a step nearer to the glory of Christ's kingdom, or to the everlasting fires prepared for the devil and his angels.

So then it is high time to walk circumspectly, to look round about us on every side, lest we get entangled among wrong roads, in briars and thorns, lest we be overtaken with a fault, lest we be drawn aside out of the way and enticed, lest we be surprised into sin, lest Satan come upon us unawares, and in an unwatchful hour get an advantage over us. We are as strangers in a strange land ; nay, if we be Christ's, we are at *enmity with the world*. And we are exposed

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on all sides ; we have not a wall on our right hand and on our left to shut us out from our foes, or to make the way plain before our face ; we may be met in the front, overtaken in the rear, thrust at from either side ; we may be attacked openly or with subtlety ; tempted by men or by our evil will, our old Adam, or by the devil ; we may be enticed out of the way of faith by false friends as well as beaten out of it by open enemies. We must remember the deceitfulness of sin. Satan does not always drag us towards perdition with links of iron, but with silken cords ; first he tempts our neighbour, and our neighbour tempts us, and we tempt others ; so sin spreads, and errors multiply ; so the mystery of iniquity works in the world.

And not only does the world tempt by worldly things to stray, but Satan transforming himself into an angel of light, sets up the lights of false religion along the side of the narrow way of truth, and mocks the fires of faith by counterfeits so as to confuse the eyes of men. He turns even religious feeling to the destruction of souls ; thus he raises debates about the truth ; he divides Christian people ; he separates them one from the other ; he suggests false doctrine and makes them have a show of truth,

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and adorns them with many texts wrongly interpreted and read. Or again, if men begin to give alms, then he tries to lame charity on its blessed way by suggesting proud and self-complacent thoughts; or again, if they pray, he comes into the temple itself and catches away their thoughts, so that even while they kneel they pray not; their prayers are clogged, and the wings of prayer broken by a thousand worldly imaginations that rush into the brain, by thoughts of their farms, and merchandise, and cattle, their gains and pleasures.

“See then that ye walk circumspectly,” is a divine voice coming down to us from heaven, while all these wiles and temptations besiege us, and press upon us round about, and try to drag away our feet from the holy path of God. We have need to walk warily in these dangerous times, to mix watchfulness with zeal, and while we pray for zeal to pray also for knowledge to direct the zeal; we have need to walk humbly with our God, and to keep close to His law; and to cleave unto Him with all earnestness of spirit, trusting in Him while we distrust ourselves, not doubting His guidance but our power of following. It is only by our unceasing *circumspection* that we can stand; the eyes

of our soul must never sleep, nor the lids fall; it is not by starting up every now and then that we can save ourselves from death, and steady ourselves in the right path. It is in our unguarded moments that Satan works with his utmost subtlety; when men sleep, then he soweth tares. We are soon separated from Christ, with so much evil in us and around us; once let us slacken our hold of the law of God, once let our grasp be loosed, and we shall have hard work to recover our hold. Once take things easily, grow indifferent, let our faith cool, and our eyes droop, cease to bestir ourselves, walk leisurely, and we know not what that space of uncircumspection, however short, may cost us. It is our true wisdom to "walk circumspectly," so saith the Spirit; "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." This is wisdom, the wisdom that is from above, that descendeth upon those who earnestly seek and covet it, that they may ascend and be lifted up to the heavenly places that are above through the precious and healing blood of Christ.

All other ways are folly, the foolishness of fools, worse than madmen's folly, because it has to be accounted for at the last day. They are as fools, not as wise, who are wise in this

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world, who live carelessly, who let days come and go and take no note how they are spent. Their folly indeed seems oftentimes here on earth to be wisdom, and wisdom to be folly ; but here are false standards and false weights by which things are weighed. This we know, this we believe, that though the Greeks count the Cross foolishness, though the men of the world look down upon the men of God, and count them fanatical, or weak-spirited, or poor simple folks, because they are in earnest, devoted to a religious life, meek in spirit, gentle and unselfish, unearthly in their affections, yet the day comes when their foolishness will be found to be true wisdom ; the children of the world who are in their generation, that is for this world, wiser than the children of light, will see their own folly when the veil is torn from their hearts, and the film drops from their eyes, and the spiritual world is revealed, and they stand before the judgment-seat of Christ to give account for their deeds. Then will they exclaim of the pilgrim of the Cross, the way-farer of God, the devoted disciple of Christ crucified, " we fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour."

But is there not some redeeming of the time

carelessness witnessing against us, there more need for circumspection now. And I ask, can look back upon a consistent even progress towards perfection, an undi- or perpetual pressing on towards the high of our calling in Christ Jesus? Alas, we all erred in times past; we have had our sins, our strayings, our wanderings from the right way; we have all many things to remember of which our consciences are ashamed. Yea, what zeal is required; ye clearing of ourselves; yea, what circumspection, what redeeming of the time, what diligence, what earnestness, what heartiness of labour towards God now in this present time unto

To walk as children of the light in dark times, to confess Christ when so many shrink from the strictness of the Cross, to persevere in the strait and narrow way when so many swerve; this is our work as members of the Church which is the body of Christ. We must strive against the sun of the day, quietly, firmly, earnestly, without show, yet without fearing to be known as at enmity with the world, as strict men, as desiring to be entirely dead to the world. The more sin abounds in the world, the more ought the Church to bestir herself, that her light be not quenched. If the days are evil, we, as members of the Church, should walk so much the more circumspectly. Seek then to walk still more closely with God; by faith draw nearer to Him; haste forward; press on; stretch forth your souls towards Him; and then He will draw near to you; He will wait for His returning children; He will look for His erring sheep that desire to return. He will go and meet you and receive you, rejoice that you have returned and redeemed the time, and turned away from folly, and laid hold of the blessed hope of everlasting life given unto you through Jesus Christ.

COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY and most merciful God,
Thy bountiful goodness keep us, we
Thee, from all things that may hurt us ;
being ready both in body and soul, may
fully accomplish those things that Thou wilt
have done ; through Jesus Christ our
Amen.

acts for the Christian Seasons.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Our warfare.

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, Habakkuk ii. ; *Evening*, Proverbs i.
EPISTLE, Eph. vi. 10. GOSPEL, St. John iv. 46.

THE Collect for this day contains a petition for pardon and peace; a prayer that every Christian must feel most needful to offer: for there are none, who will not say their transgressions are manifold, and their sins many in number; they who, by self-examination, have carefully searched their own hearts, are even more ready than others to confess this truth, their sense of their sins and frequent falls, being so much deeper by reason of their having compared their actions with the good deeds they ought to have done, and of their viewing them in some degree in the light with which God regards them. Let then may all pray for pardon and peace, that so we "may be cleansed from" our "sins, and serve God with a quiet mind."

Now the Epistle shews what kind of an enemy we have to deal with in our warfare while upon

this earth, and by the subjugation of whom can we alone have peace. It shews that man's enemy is not mere flesh and blood, whom he might be able to withstand by his own strength, but some power far more dangerous and terrible. "We wrestle not," says the apostle, "against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." And this description will be more clearly understood from a paraphrase of a learned divine, which runs as follows; "The combat for which we are to be fortified is not against any ordinary human enemies, but against the several ranks of devils."

It is against this great army we have to fight. Has then each of us to go forth alone, and single-handed against this legion of evil spirits? Not so. Christians too are enrolled into a vast army, whose duty it is to keep unceasing war with the host of spiritual foes. We took the oath of allegiance to the Leader and King of this army, when we promised in our baptism to be His faithful *soldiers* and manfully to *fight* under His banner, against sin, the world, and the devil. Every baptized person, therefore, is a soldier in *this* vast army, whose battle is against these

“principalities and powers and spirits in heavenly places.”

And let us consider how men contend in the battles of this world. If two states are at war, how do the armies of each employ their time? Do they remain quietly side by side, merely observing any designs that either may be forming? If one of them is preparing some means of attack, does the other look quietly on and take no steps to resist? During the hours of night, does one army quietly lie down to rest, and keep no guard upon the foe? This would be very bad warfare. And if the army of one state so conducted itself, while the other was active, and taking hostile measures, there could be no doubt which side would gain the victory in the end. No: when two states are really and earnestly contending in the field, there is great vigilance shewn on both sides; if one takes measures for an attack, the other provides for its own defence, while at the same time it makes its own preparations for a counter attack. Throughout the night when the foe may suddenly come, and when victory would at once be his, if their opponents were found slumbering, the watch-fires burn and the guards are posted to give the alarm. Every precaution is taken by both sides to

ensure the victory. And although with regard to the result there is of course much uncertainty, yet very generally the army whose precautions are best taken, wins the battle. Much of course depends upon the skill of the general, and the number of the troops. Still it is often found, where there is a skilful general, even if his army be inferior to that of the enemy, that the victory is on his side, due to his prudence and forethought, his able plans and skilful manœuvres.

On the other hand, there are numerous instances where greater numbers have been defeated from bad generalship, from self-confidence and carelessness. They have trusted to their own strength ; they have felt that if the enemy came against them they had only to put out their strength, to draw up their own battalions and commence the battle, and at once the victory would be on their side. But such self-confidence generally obtains its own punishment ; and instead of such being conquerors, they meet with a disastrous rout, many being often left captives with the enemy. It is hardly requisite to bring forward any example of this ; such is the almost necessary result of carelessness and self-confidence ; but the event of the fight at Agincourt, under our own *King Henry V.*, is a case in point.

Now the Epistle for the day explains to us very clearly *our* warfare. Its words may apply to us in a twofold way; first in our capacity as a Church, as a number of Christians all knit together and forming one body; and secondly, to each one of us individually, as to our manner of waging that particular portion of the battle, which every baptized man has assigned to him in the vast army. Let us first of all consider the Epistle in its application to us as a body of men, that is in its application to the Catholic Church. Now we are all members of that Church, if we have been baptized. It is our baptism which pledges us to be "soldiers and servants" of Christ. That is the time of our enrolment into the army. The army to which we belong has, as its opponent, the troops of Satan and evil angels. He is a very great and powerful leader; no stratagems are left disregarded by him; cunning, deceit, falsehood, are weapons with which he works. He and his bands are never off their guard; they keep perpetual watch. His eye is ever scanning his adversary's position, and wherever he sees an undefended point, there he makes his assault. If he finds a post unguarded even for a moment, or only slightly protected, he fails not to bring his stratagems to bear. Under him are many

subtle and daring captains ; there are principalities and powers ; there are thrones and dominions, and all the other orders of the infernal potentates. His warfare is unceasing ; night and day his attack is going on, now here, now there ; now with one weapon, then with another ; at one time the particular object of his attack may have been on his guard when he first brought his forces up for the struggle ; and indeed he may have prevailed against him, and may be thinking that he has repulsed his malignant foe, and that all is now secure ; but this is a dangerous confidence ; assuredly he is lying in wait somewhere near, and no sooner shall he find the watch diminished, or the resisting force less powerful, than he will spring from his lair and renew the attack ; redoubling his assaults at the time when they are less easy to be repulsed. Again at another time his first onset carries all away, and very hard is it to rescue any from his toils. I am now speaking of his attacks not on mankind individually, but on the body which the baptized compose. Ever since the great Head of the Church collected around Him His soldiers, and led them on to battle with His foe, have the machinations of that foe been to defeat His army. *That he has not been wholly unsuccessful, the*

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

ate of that army bears unfortunate witness. We see he has made an inroad in one place and another. He has contrived to make the soldiers of one army form into separate bodies, and to battle with each other. For well he knows if the vast army was all composed of true-hearted soldiers; if each detachment, whether they come from the East or the West, were resolved to stand together and fight with him; and did not weaken their power by battling among themselves, that then his triumphs would soon be over, and his army would be routed. And indeed it is nothing else but this spirit of division, or this cowardice, that preserves him; for the leader of the vast army, Christ Jesus Himself, is far more powerful than he; all power belongs to Him; and He has only to exert that power, and by Himself He could subvert all his adversaries' schemes and punish His own soldiers for their lukewarmness. His will and law, however, is only to lead His soldiers to battle and to help them there, not to win the battle for them without their own endeavours. It is no fault, no weakness in Him that the army does not always gain the day, it is because they forget their duty, and so become open to defeat.

Now, *I said, this foe, Satan, has not been wholly*

unsuccessful in his warfare ; there are posts now occupied by his troops, once defended by the soldiers of the Cross. If we look to the East we see positions once rich in the array of soldiers they could bring to this vast army, now desolate and neglected. He threw in among them his weapons and lo ! the result. Surely, then, such a result is not placed before us for no purpose. It verily contains an example. This country, England, is one position occupied by the soldiers of this army ; the banner of the Cross ought to be our most glorious possession. But what is the case ? Alas ! is it not to be feared that like other positions ours may be forced by our foe, whose attacks let us remember never grow less, and that as he has mastered others', so he may do ours. We do not present an undivided front to him ; some of us are careless and forget who is their foe ; others think their own weapons are enough to repulse him ; and hence our divided action, and his success. Now what does the Epistle say that may help us in this matter ? It tells us to " take the whole armour of God " and to have as our weapons " truth," " righteousness," " the preparation of the Gospel of peace," " the shield of faith, wherewith to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked," " the sword of the Spirit,

which is the Word of God," and to train ourselves in prayer and watching. The Church among us, men, ought to have truth as a weapon. It must not be content with any thing else. It must hold one definite belief, and that belief must be, not what seems expedient and advisable, but simply that which is truth; it cannot admit of two beliefs, for truth is one and indivisible. Righteousness must be the breast-plate of the army, the defence of its position, so as to beat back the evil weapons of the foe. The preparation of the Gospel of peace must be a weapon by which our detachment shall go on with charity towards all men, striving in a peaceful spirit. "Faith must be the shield," that "faith once delivered to the saints," that is, true belief in all the doctrines of Christianity, a hearty realizing of that belief, a steady carrying out of it in action. The Word of God for a sword, by which we may slay all enemies that tempt to unbelief, and urge on to desertion and postacy; prayer is another weapon; watching is another, by which to take care that the foe do not break down our defences, and get within our entrenchments, or undermine our position, and scatter us. These are the weapons our troops should use; our generals under their


great Leader should be wary, and urge on their men to keep these apostolic injunctions, and to provide themselves with these apostolic weapons for their warfare ; and then the men, if they be desirous of the name of good soldiers, if they be determined to keep their oath of enrolment, will be obedient, dutiful, valiant, vigilant, and so will this detachment of the army march on to victory, to be crowned when victory is achieved, by their Leader and their King.

And whatever our army may forget, at least let them not omit their vigilance. I have shewn above the different results usually attending vigilance and carelessness. This latter would be one of the greatest advantages our foe could desire ; for then he would creep within our position unperceived, and before we were aware he would have overthrown us. Oh ! let us then as a Church, as one branch of that Catholic Church that Christ Jesus founded, be wary : let us be like good soldiers : let our detachment, our division of the vast army not slumber at its post : but being ever watchful, so may we hope to succeed, and keeping ever brightly burnished the weapons of our warfare, may we hope to resist the enemy and to go on to prevail.

But I said the Epistle had two applications ;

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

second of which I proceed to speak of now ;
ude to our own individual warfare with this
e malignant foe. It is one peculiarity in his
fare that he not only attacks us as a body,
each of us one by one. The ground on which
tread, while we march on after our great
er, is full of pitfalls and snares laid by him ;
while the army is passing on to victory it
be, any one may be cast down and over-
e. The same great vigilance, then, is very
ssary for each of us ; each individual of us
t take upon us the whole armour of God.
ill not do to grasp one weapon and think
enough ; none of them can be spared, for
foe at one time uses one weapon, and at
her time he attacks with a different one.
h must be a weapon in our hands, and it is
ry necessary one, as our foe ever uses deceit
lying, and these can only be met by the
ter weapon of truth. Righteousness must
ur breast-plate. If that piece of armour be
cared for, our life is in danger, for the dart
ur adversary will soon thrust us through.
preparation of the Gospel of peace must not
mitted, that is, the practice of Christian cha-
and peaceableness, that we may advance on
march with expedition, and not fall by the



spare his son. Assuredly, then, none of
lack that ; let us put on us our helmet, the
salvation, which will guard us from all
that may light upon us to hurt us ; let us
be God's Word, by which we may always
And finally, let our training be constant
unceasing watching ; remembering that
that our Leader has spoken to us, " We
pray, that ye enter not into temptation
" what I say unto you I say unto all, we

This is the way in which our warfare is
carried on. These are the weapons the
tells us we should use. Shall we, then, be
soldiers, or base cowards ? Shall we be
men, or perjurers ? Shall we, in one we

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

"The paths of pleasantness and peace."

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, Proverbs ii.; *Evening*, Proverbs iii.

EPISTLE, Phil. i. 3. GOSPEL, St. Matt. xviii. 21.

THE Sundays after Trinity are coming to an end; the autumn is fast fading away; it is the old age as it were of the Christian year; it is almost the end! What are the lessons which the Church would bring home to our mind; is there any thing appropriate and suitable in her teaching at such a season as this? We may say in reply that her mode of instruction is just what is most natural, just what, considering the time, you would expect it to be. She has already put before us the whole fabric as it were of Christian doctrine, plain, positive, startling, as well as winning truths; she has selected the most striking examples of virtue and vice, she has warned us by denunciation of God's anger, and by threats of His judgments; but as wise sayings become the aged, we are now taught from the Proverbs of the wise king of Israel.

We shall soon have simple and awakening truths once more standing out before us in the services of the Church, and death and the judgment will again sound in our ears: but until Advent comes round, wisdom will address us in chastened accents, and affectionately call out to her children, "Turn you at my reproof, behold I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."

Our teaching, then, is that of a tender aged parent, who has herself gained experience from the past, and learnt to see at last her condition in life in its true colours, and who now repeats the result of her own observation for those who have not yet plunged into the troubled waters, and who if they would but listen to the words of wisdom, experience, and love, would be spared many a fall, many a sorrow.

It were vain to make any more general remarks upon the wise sayings which the Proverbs propose for our consideration; let it be enough to say that like the works of nature they seem at first to lie in a rude but noble simplicity and apparent irregularity, and that it is not until we have dwelt upon them reverently and made them a subject of deep meditation, that we seem to see the

outlines of the divine system on which they are written.

Let us to-day take a single passage only, which certainly comes to every one in a most attractive form. Solomon tells us, that wisdom's ways are "ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;" we may at once see that wisdom means religion; Christ our Lord and Redeemer, the Teacher of the religion we profess, who is the fountain of truth and godliness, is brought before us in Scripture as the Word, the Power, the Wisdom of God. So that it is very clear, that these happy ways are the ways of faith, love, and obedience, and that these peaceful paths are those which lead us to the Lamb.

That they are so full of pleasantness and peace, it is of all things the most important that we should know;—

1. Pleasure and peace are objects which we are constantly aiming at in life; we are, both good and bad, alike in this respect, that we are ever seeking and longing after happiness in some form or other; it is the end which we each of us pursue; herein we differ, that too many seek it in what is vain, transitory, unsatisfying, and perishing, the smaller part of man-

kind in what can really afford them what they seek. It seems that the earlier parts of the Proverbs are addressed more especially to the young, to those who have not yet to any extent followed the empty specious visions of joy which the world holds out, so that the call of wisdom meets them at the very outset of life and opens to them a far more glorious and blessed prospect than any which their fancy can picture to the mind; "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom and the man that getteth understanding, for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold: she is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her."

The inspired philosopher seems to say, "Before you have tried any thing else, try the ways of God; before you have bought experience for yourself, learn of me, who have already made the trial; taste and see how gracious the Lord is; take His yoke upon you humbly, and see

whether it is not a light yoke and an easy burden."

Certainly for peace there is not so natural a longing as after pleasantness; but there are seasons in our life when peace is a very choice gift. Think of the noise and turmoil, the feverish excitement and harassing restlessness which distract and confuse the mind, and how anxious cares molest and cruel disappointments stress us, and how in seeking pleasure in our own way, we pursue as it were a shadow which ever is before us, and yet ever eludes our grasp.

To persons who are in such a frame as this, no promise can be more gracious and consoling than that which speaks of peace; it is just what they long for, and will supply a want which nothing else can satisfy, and at such a time there are no words of our Redeemer more full of everlasting love, than those which say, "Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

2. Religion affords pleasure and peace to the soul, because it is only in the ways of the word and in the narrow path of holiness, that the powers and capacities of the soul meet with proper and suitable objects. God has so

but what is lasting can meet all the wants of our nature. And more than this, it is a truth in all philosophy, that the highest objects are which we pursue, the highest gratification which is afforded us in pursuing and gaining them. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" God "without variableness or shadow of turning" appearing before us as our Parent, our Sustainer, our Guide, afford to the true believer the sources of pleasure because the highest objects of thought; and when he makes God's love his chief aim in this world he can in sincerity declare, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth that I desire like thee."

else. The face of nature seems to smile upon the faithful; the beauteous shapes into which God has thrown the creations of His hands; the fair and matchless tints with which He has clothed His works are full of charms for the pure in heart. They are so to him, because he can trace on every side the goodness and holiness of their great Creator, and see His wisdom in them all.

Again, a religious man finds peace and even a sweetness in what are called the bitter things of life; the sorrows even incident to the state here below have consolation in them. Patience, endurance, resignation, all imply something painful to undergo, something hard to be borne, and afflicting to be submitted to; but they shew as well that we acknowledge the wisdom, goodness, and omnipotence of God, and have a firm conviction that we are in the hands of a tender affectionate parent. And it is amidst the crosses of life that another thought comes in; in them we may become followers of Him who took our nature upon Him, and in it was made perfect through sufferings; they draw our minds to that Lord who as He passed through all the changes and chances of this our mortal course, breathed a *charm into each* as He went along. It was

of our friends, and to surround ourselves
those whom we may love and by whom we
be loved in return ; but His presence is
frequently to be found in the way of tear
paths of sorrow, suffering, and self-denial
those in which the Son of God most often
and as providence forces us along them, we
by following the example of our blessed
find a comfort in them all, find those bliss
and that peace which the Incarnate God
behind Him wherever He went ; we may
word, be in afflictions and adversity, " as
and, behold, we live ; as chastened, and
killed ; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing
poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing
and yet possessing all things "

is over we may enter in upon it and be glad. He speaks of the present and tells us of what we may have almost at once. The happiness which he promises is something which is given us now in the narrow path of righteousness, which is intended to make us choose that before all others, and to cheer the travellers as they pursue their weary and blessed way.

No doubt we live in a world of shadows and perplexities, and only see the effects of God's wisdom, not the wisdom itself; but these shadows are blessed, if to the eye of faith they pourtray the outlines of the wonders in the unseen world; and these perplexities even have a solace in them, if they lead us to a firm trust in the goodness and providence of God; and in love He so adapts the effects of His wisdom to our wants that they give us delight; He makes the walk of faith peaceful to us, enabling us to find pleasure in tracing the operation of that Saviour, "whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

He does so for a twofold purpose; in order that now we may go on our way rejoicing, and also *that by tasting* how gracious the Lord is

in this our state of imperfection, and how pleasant His ways are, and how full of peace the path of holiness and devotion is, He may attract our minds to that eternal home, where He will Himself be our happiness, and Himself be the centre of all our love; where with voices that never tire, and feet that never grow weary, and bodies which know no decay, we shall blend our voices in the everlasting chant, and mingle with the blessed company of the first-born, and being made like unto Him in his eternal kingdom shall follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

4. In all Christian philosophy two things are always to be understood, for in them as it were the whole system and fabric rest; the one, that we have a sinful and corrupt nature, and that after our new birth in Baptism, the seeds of evil still remain: the other, that we have always at hand and in our hearts the all-powerful help of the Holy Spirit of God. The wise among the heathen did not understand this; they neither perceived the disease which affected the whole human race, nor had eyes to see the remedy which was to be provided. The consequence was that they could not direct their disciples aright, or open to them the way of peace; they bid them spend their money for that which was not

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bread, and labour for that which satisfieth not. The knowledge, then, of our weakness and of where our true strength lies, throws a very bright light upon the nature of our Christian pleasures, and shews us the character of the comforts which we are to expect. It is not continual uninterrupted peace, or quietness that knows no break. It is peace after victory, and the feeling of gratification arising from self-discipline and self-conquest.

It was not so at the beginning; though God has ever wished the good and pleasure of His creatures, He did not accomplish it by the same means by which He does now. He placed the first man in a pleasant garden, with every thing at hand to gratify the taste and delight the eye. He had but to take and enjoy the blessings which His kind Creator had heaped up around him. Here he dwelt in peace, here God intended him to prolong a tranquil happy life, free from perplexity, sorrow, and tears, with the surest signs around him, that he was under God's tender affectionate care. He need not have lost his peaceful home and quiet resting-place, had he not lost by his own wilfulness that innocence, which alone enabled him to find pleasure in so simple a condition. All is

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altered now ; indeed man's whole nature, the constitution of nature itself, is altered to suit the altered relations which exist between man and his Creator ; but though we are children of Adam and heirs of his weakness, peevishness, and sin, God does not condemn us to a life of sorrow, depression, and bitterness. One class of God's creatures are sentenced to eternal woe and despair ; the angels who lost their first estate, who after being admitted into the presence of their Maker, the glories of His kingdom, and had received of the heavenly gift, rebelled against the Lord and King ; they were cast out never to return again into God's presence ; there is no hope for them ; they who despised heavenly joys could never be fit to return to it again, and as the Cherubim with the flaming sword stood at the gate to prevent man from going back to the earthly paradise, so does God's sentence stand good that the spirit of evil never find a place in His favour or Holy Kingdom. It is not so with man ; the penalties of the fall are heavy enough ; such as the weariness, and toil which are laid upon our bodies, and the labour with which we support our *spiritual* life, and subdue the evil temptations.

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st out the perverse desires and inclinations
our depraved hearts. But our labour is
t in vain in the Lord. We may go on
hope, and as we proceed we shall find
ace; genuine happiness will attend our
uggles. It is quite a different enjoyment
m the quietness of Eden, and our rest will
ar but little resemblance to that of Adam, as
wandered through the cool groves and gazed
on the tranquil waters which flowed through
e garden of the Lord; but we have not changed
: the worse in that respect; it is a deeper and
ore exalted pleasure, it is a more unearthly
ace which is offered to those among the chil-
en of men, who by God's grace are enabled to
ercome the effects of the fall of their first parent
d recover what he lost. We know that fruits
d flowers on which man has exercised his
our and skill, are often more choice, more
asant to the taste, more grateful to the smell
an those which grow in their wild and natural
ite. It is the same with the soul of man;
en he has learned to rule the passions and
petites, and to subdue the obstinacy and per-
rseness which are ever ready to break forth
thin, he is brought to a higher, nobler, and
ore *heavenly state*, and to joys which are more

chastened, and peace more refined than he knew neither good or evil, who served God a kind of instinct, and enjoyed that on which he expended no labour. God makes good come out of evil, so that when in punishment He left man to labour in the world and His work in the Church, He held out and holds out a higher and a choicer recompense than ever He had offered before. The highest pleasure is associated with the idea of self-denial and self-mastery in the Christian's mind; and his true and lasting peace is the reward of victory.

First comes temptation, danger, uncertainty, a consciousness of weakness, and of our own dullness; then the earnest cry for help, and humble endeavour in reliance on God's aid for success; then the blessed consciousness that God has been present with us, and has exercised His heavenly grace in our behalf. First comes the fancied pleasures of this life, and the vain pursuit of its flattering promises; then the feelings of restlessness that our longings are still ungratified and our desires still unfulfilled; then the self-reproach and earnest repentance, and the humble prayer for pardon and forgiveness; then *the trial of the narrow little-frequented way*

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with and obedience ; then the knowledge that we have at last chosen aright, and that in spite of every drawback and chastisement we have found peace.

This is the mysterious law of God's kingdom, and it reveals another law still more gracious to those who persevere.

The pleasures go on increasing as we taste them more frequently ; our capacities for enjoying purely spiritual blessings become greater the more we exercise them ; and as every step brings the faithful Christian nearer to His God, he reaps the blessedness of his near approach, he is filled more and more with the love and wisdom of the Lord, he partakes more fully of the divine nature, his seasons of religious peace come round more frequently ; and though there will be ever something imperfect in this place of our trial, always something painful for the flesh to bear, he will daily become more ready for the period, when he will drink of those rivers that make glad the city of God, and enter into those everlasting pleasures which are at His right hand for evermore.

COLLECT.

LORD, we beseech Thee to keep Thy
hold the Church in continual god
that through Thy protection it may be
from all adversities, and devoutly given to
Thee in good works, to the glory of Thy
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

tracts for the Christian Seasons.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Voice of the Church

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, Prov. xi. ; *Evening*, Prov. xii.

EPISTLE, Phil. iii. 17. GOSPEL, St. Matt. xxii. 15.

MUCH of our Lord's teaching must have been unintelligible to His disciples ; not only because it was deep and mysterious, but because it referred to things which had no existence, but in the eternal counsels of the Most High. He, to whom a thousand years are as one day, spoke and taught as if the great mystery of man's redemption were already accomplished. Some instances of this will readily occur to our minds.

Such were the mysterious words about eating His flesh and drinking His blood, at which the Jews recoiled with horror, saying, "Can this man give us His flesh to eat?" Or those which were equally a marvel to the wondering Nicodemus, in which He spoke of the second birth of water and the Spirit. Or again, when He declared to a self-seeking generation that if a man

did not take up his cross and follow Him, he could not be His disciple. And another striking instance we have in those words which we read in St. Matthew's Gospel, where He commands His disciples that if a man neglect to hear the Church, they should count him as a heathen man and a publican.

Now in all these cases our blessed Lord uttered truths which none that heard Him could have understood. His disciples could but treasure them in their hearts, as His mother had the sayings of His childhood, hoping and believing that none of His gracious words would ever be spoken in vain, but that He, who should hereafter be sent to lead them into all truth would bring out of His treasures the old thing as well as new. And the Spirit of truth did we know, make all things manifest to them and fulfilled their Master's promise of bringing all things to remembrance whatsoever He had said to them. Soon they could feel the blessing yet even then mysterious import of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, as they brake the bread and poured forth the wine, and we taught that the bread they broke was the communion, i. e. partaking, of the body of Christ and the cup of blessing they blessed was t

communion of the blood of Christ; (1 Cor. x. 16.) So too His words about the new birth became clear, so that he who ran might read, when the Holy Spirit taught them that men were saved of God's mercy, by the washing of regeneration, i. e., by means of the washing which gives regeneration or the new birth, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, (Tit. iii. 5.) Thus again, when the time was come, they remembered what He had told them of bearing their cross after Him, as they thought of that awful day, when they had seen Him toiling and faint under the heavy burden of His own cross of wood. And so also of the other example which I gave, and of which I wish particularly to speak in the present tract, I mean Christ's words about the Church; which he who obeyed not was to be treated as a heathen man and a publican; that is, as one cut off from Christ, one with whom we may not have fellowship.

At first these words, like the rest, must have been strange and unintelligible; they knew not what the Church was, and therefore knew not what it was "to hear the Church." But after a while, when Christ Himself, just before He left them in bodily presence for ever, spoke to them of "*power from on high*," with which they were

to be endued ; and when He actually
 on them, and said to them, "Receive
 Holy Ghost ; whosoever sins ye remit,
 remitted unto them ; and whosoever
 retain, they are retained ;" and when in
 the "power from on high" really came
 its fulness, and impelled them, in spite
 sense of human frailty, to go forth a
 remission of sins to those who would
 receive it—then did the Lord's "dark
 gleam forth with a brightness not
 world, and like the live coal with which
 seraph touched the prophet's lips, kindled
 dull hearts, and consume the mists which
 own helplessness had cast around them.

They were the Church, they learnt ; and
 to which was enforced by such a fearful
 that Church built on the rock, against which
 gates of hell should not prevail. The sacrament
 which they alone could administer, the
 keys which He had entrusted to them
 who "openeth and no man shutteth, and
 and no man openeth." They were the Church
 which all must be added who "would be
 (Acts ii. 47;) or rather, they were the living
 corner stones of the spiritual building, of which
 who sought admission by the baptism

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parted were also made living stones, the whole together growing into an holy temple in the Lord.

Nor, as the Spirit led them onwards to the fuller perception of divine things, did they shrink from the consciousness of their high powers. They knew what they had received, and were not afraid to let their light shine before men. They were the first who "received the gift" of the Lord, the first "stewards of the mysteries of God." They were "the foundation" on which God's new temple was built, a joint foundation with God's prophets of old; nay, even with Jesus Christ Himself, the chief corner stone. (Eph. ii. 20.) To them it was committed to decree, by the Holy Ghost and with the Holy Ghost, which of God's earlier laws men were to keep, and which they were to keep no longer. (Acts xv. 28.) They could forgive sins, even "in the person of Christ," (2 Cor. ii. 10;) and the whole Church together they were taught to call Christ's "Body," and His "fulness," (Eph. i. 23;) that is, that which He especially fills with His grace and glory, as the heaven of heavens is the fulness of the invisible Father. Moreover the Spirit instructed them to declare that the Church was "the pillar and ground of the truth;" (1 Tim. iii. 15;) *that on which God's holy truth rests,*

as a building rests on its foundations and pillars which support it. And if a man obey the divine laws which Christ had given for the governance of the Church, they were "in the Name of," and "with the power of Jesus Christ," "to deliver such an one from Satan," that his flesh might be punished, his soul through repentance saved. (1 Cor. v.)

Such, Christian reader, was the light of the full shining of that divine light which was cast upon every man, cast upon that saying of the Lord which at first His disciples comprehended. And thus, we may think, to their loving hearts did the very darkness which had before their spiritual sight, only add to the intensity of that illumination which they now received from on high. For that their Master's words were prophetic, and looked beyond the scenes of coming years, would only, when those scenes were dispersed, give to them a force, which they might not have possessed; and day by day as they more fully realized their high obligation, must they have felt more powerfully their obligation, as spoken by Him to whom they owed no existence, except in so far as He condescended to employ it for the salvation of men for eternity.

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Since then this is so, a question most naturally suggests itself, in which you and I, Christian reader, ought to feel the deepest interest. The question I mean is, how far we, who are members of a Church, which by the principles of God's Word and the laws of the land alike, is acknowledged to be the Church of Christ in this country, are bound by this solemn command of our Lord and Master ?

And to this question, I think the answer is as plain as it is concise. If we are an Apostolic Church, we are bound by Apostolic laws. If we are "the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood;" the Church to which the Lord added daily such as should be saved; the Church of which "Christ is the Head;" the Church which is "one body," even as it has "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all;" then, when our Lord declared that if any one "neglect to hear the Church," he must be counted as a heathen man and a publican, He meant that our Church is that Church which it were such peril to disobey, and that we, as members of that Church, if we hear it not, are to be counted as heathens and publicans.

We of this Church of England believe in one

Catholic and Apostolic Church. Little as men think of this, we believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church, with the same belief with which we believe in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost: for all together make one Catholic faith, of which each link, great or small, binds the whole in one. We are members of a Church which we believe possesses as its divine heritage every gift which the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul possessed. We know not indeed if God gives our Church the power of working miracles which He gave to them, for there is not the like need; we know that He could and would, if in His wisdom He thought it needful. But every other gift that the Church ever possessed since the day of Pentecost, we believe that our Church, the Church of England, still possesses. We have the same gifts of the Spirit, the same grace of sacraments, the same grace of holy orders, the same Word of God, the same faith, the same power to teach that faith, the same power to bind and loose, the same power to forgive sins, for we have the same presence of Christ, and where Christ is present, we have all He died and rose again to earn. If it were not so, if we have not and are *not* all this, we are a Church of which the Bible

does not tell us, and our faith, by which we could be saved, must be a new revelation, and not the revelation of the Bible.

But it is otherwise ; we believe in an Apostolic Church, and we are that Apostolic Church ; not the whole Church, but a portion of it, which may God in His own good time unite to the rest once more, for it is one, it cannot be many. And hence it follows that our Church, as being an Apostolic Church, inherits with her other privileges, that awful one which our Lord, even in prophecy, declared, that he that heard her not must be counted as a heathen man and a publican.

Since, therefore, we are bound to hear the Church, the Church must have a voice which we may hear. Let us consider, then, what Holy Scripture and our reason teach us about that voice.

1. The voice of the Church is the voice of Christ. The Church has no right or power to be heard, except as she speaks from Christ. The Church, like the moon, shines by a borrowed light ; her brightness is not her own, it is the brightness of the Sun of Righteousness. But Christ has given the Church a power which is

above every earthly power. "All power is given unto Me," He said to His disciples, "in heaven and in earth, go ye *therefore*," and administer the gifts that I entrust to you. The Church is Christ's fulness, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." All His divine grace and blessings dwell especially in that Church which He filleth, as He filleth naught else besides. Therein are contained God's two inestimable gifts in Christ Jesus; truth, and grace to live by that truth. These are the Church's treasures; the faith which Christ has taught her, and those means of grace by which men are enabled to walk according to that faith. And over these treasures the Church has sole and indisputable right. She can teach, and she alone, by the heavenly light wherewith Christ has enlightened her, what man must believe for his salvation; and she can aid him, and she alone, by the presence of her Lord with her, who is the only source of strength, how to practise what he believes, and live so that that belief may save him. These two gifts the Church has received from her Head, and no man taketh them from her.

2. And from this it follows, as a matter of course, that as the Church is the guardian of

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e faith, she is bound to let men know what e faith is. If our Lord had not meant that e Church should speak plainly and distinctly, e would not have attached a penalty to not aring her. "For if the trumpet give an unrtain sound who shall prepare himself to the ttle?" Not that Christ's faith is a variable ing, which must adapt itself to the ways of en and be changed as they change. The faith

which the Church is the keeper, is "the faith rich was once," i. e., once for all, "delivered nto the saints." But that faith may be as-iled, new views of it may be put forth, the ritten Word of God may be explained in unard-of ways, and so doubt and confusion may erspread what once was clear. Here then

an especial occasion when the Church must t up her voice, and cry aloud. If she speaks t so that all her children may hear, she is ifaithful to her trust. There cannot be two iths, as the unhappy charity, falsely so called, the present day, would lead us to think. If od's truth is not one, it does not exist. And the Church declares not what that truth is, e is no longer "the pillar and ground of the uth," nor can she therefore claim the allegiance *her sons*; the very chief office with which her

Lord entrusted her is rendered void, and the Lord's faith too suffers for the short-comings of that faith's guardian.

3. Another great truth is an inference from what has been said above, viz., that the teaching of the Church by the voice of her living members, and her teaching by the written Word of God, must be one and the same. Neither has any power or worth except as being from God, and both have power, and supreme power, as making known to man what God wills that he should know. God in Christ is present with His Church, He is always with her, "even unto the end of the world." God in Christ has spoken to us by His Holy Scripture, in words which can never be changed, till He Himself think fit to change them. Therefore the teaching of the Church by her creeds, and formularies, and declarations of faith, must be always consistent with the teaching of God's written Word. God has given His Church no power to alter one jot or tittle of what He spoke by His Spirit and commanded to be written for man's use. Nay, the teaching of the written Word is surer than any other teaching of the Church, for the one is "graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever;" the other depends on the words of men, from whom

God's presence might for their sins be withdrawn. Christ indeed will always, He has promised, lead His Church into all truth, for that Church is "the pillar and ground of the truth;" and a certain mark that He does so, is that the teaching of the Church by her living voice and by her written word, is one. If ever the Church or a portion of the Church teach what is contrary to the Word of God, then must we fear that God's presence is no longer, for a time at least, a light and guide to it; but that as with the hosts of Pharaoh, He is troubling it for its backslidings, taking off its chariot-wheels and making them drive heavily.

4. From what I said before too, it follows with equal certainty that the voice of the Church is above every voice of man, in those matters which Christ has entrusted to her charge. No one can teach men what is the true faith, or impart the grace by which men are kept stedfast in that faith, but the Church herself. The greatest earthly power is powerless, when it arrogates to itself any portion of the Church's divine rights. The lowest who bears office in the Church, and has received from the Apostles in an unbroken order, and through them from Christ, commission to administer any of the

Church's ordinances, has a power which the mightiest king dare not claim, for he gave it not, neither may he take it away.

Kings bear rule in God's Name, just as does the Church; only the one in things of this world, the other in things of the next world. We, as English Churchmen, owe allegiance to both. We obey our queen because she rules by God's authority over this land. As far as the Church is of this world, as far as it is a society upon earth, made up of English men and English women, so far is the queen supreme over the Church, so far has she the right to govern and control the Church. But spiritual power she has none, nor ever had earthly sovereign. In things purely spiritual the English Church acknowledges but one Head and Ruler, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not that allegiance to the Church and allegiance to the sovereign need clash one with the other. Our Church's lesson for the day out of the Holy Gospel teaches us in the Lord's own words to "render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Nay, if we obey the Church, we obey our queen with a most loving and hearty obedience, for the Church again and again commands

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us to "be subject unto the higher powers," warning us that "they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

And English Churchmen, such as you and I, Christian reader, thank God that we are, need not, I trust, fear that our obedience to the Church will ever interfere with our obedience to the queen. If indeed they who are our sovereign's counsellors and act in her name, have ignorantly and unadvisedly taken upon themselves a part of the divine office, which the Lord committed to the Church alone, and have actually, though they disclaimed intention of doing so, spoken with the Church's voice, declaring what she alone can declare, what the faith is with which her Lord entrusted her—if this alas! has been so, we must hope that such have been warned for the future by those who have been to us the Azariahs of our priesthood, that in so doing, "they have trespassed, neither shall it be for their honour from the Lord God." (2 Chron. xxvi.) The time indeed may come when it will be our part, proud as we may feel of our English loyalty, which is almost a proverb amongst the nations of the earth, "to obey God rather than men." Yet not even then will we be disloyal; *we may patiently endure, we will never*

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forget our allegiance to the Lord's anointed; we will yield a ready obedience where we may, even though where a higher law forbids, we may have to suffer for the faith; even if men in their blindness, which God avert, should force us to choose between obedience to our queen and to our God.

I have thus, though of necessity hastily and most imperfectly, touched upon the duty of the Church to let her voice be heard, amidst the Babel-like confusion of discordant faiths around her, and the noisy clamour of those within and without that seek her downfall. I will now say a few words on our duty towards her, our duty of hearing her and obeying when we hear.

If then our Church be what we have seen the Church of the Apostles to be, we are bound to listen to what she commands, as it is not the Church which speaks, but Christ who speaketh in her. If she is the appointed teacher of the faith, "the pillar and ground of the truth," the faithful and wise steward set as ruler over the household of God, it is the plain duty of her children to accept what she teaches, and obey it readily and without questioning. There must lie an undoubted obligation on every member of the Church, be he high or low, wise or ignorant, *to receive with meekness the Church's doctrine,*

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as the doctrine which God has commissioned her to teach. It is not our part to run hither and thither, and seek whether this doctrine or that be the truth; it is enough for us to be sure that the Church teaches it, that Church which at our peril we "neglect to hear."

We know indeed, that the Church must never contradict itself; that the Church speaking by its living mouths must never gainsay the Church speaking by the written Word of God; when it does this, it will be time for us to usurp the Church's office, and pronounce for ourselves what the right faith is. But till this be so, (and He, who loved the Church and gave Himself for it, will never, we trust, forsake what He bought so dearly,) we shall, if we are wise, yield our Church a hearty and stedfast obedience, convinced that she is the very Church of the Apostles in all doctrine and discipline, possessing a power, whatever men may say, not of this world, and speaking, now as ever, with authority, though worldly persecution, or the weakness of erring sons, may fear to let her voice be heard and try to stifle it.

But again; amidst all our earnest contentions for the faith, let us not forget, Christian brother, another saying of our heavenly Master, that "*if any man will do God's will, he shall*"

....

The best medicine for religious perplexities
has been well said, is a holy life. For a true
faith is God's gift to man ; we can only believe
because God leads us into the truth. A
holy life will most surely lead those, who amid
difficulties and uncertainties make His glory
the end and object of all their actions, by
conforming themselves to the image of the
Son, and by their example winning others
to the same. We might wonder perhaps
how stress which God's Word, speaking to the
Christian Church, lays on a right faith and the
fulfillment of false doctrine ; just as, when spoken
to the Jewish Church, it does on the hatred
of idolatry. We might be inclined to thi

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thren and the gainsayings of our enemies, to think, that patient continuance in well-doing will surely bring its reward. And let us not forget that a part of that "well-doing," and an important part, is "to hear the Church," to believe in it as God's teacher of the truth ; and that a reverent humble spirit will draw down a blessing from the Lord, for "them that are meek shall He guide in judgment, and such as are gentle, them shall He learn His way."

COLLECT.

O GOD, our refuge and strength, who
Author of all godliness ; be ready,
seech Thee, to hear the prayers of Thy C
and grant that those things which we as
fully we may obtain effectually ; through
Christ our Lord. Amen.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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Ridicule.

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, Prov. xiii. ; *Evening*, Prov. xiv.

EPISTLE, Col. i. 3. GOSPEL, St. Matt. ix. 18.

“ I DECLARE I hear thunder ;” exclaimed a young woman, who was standing with several companions and watching the summer’s sun declining beyond a broad and level heath. So little sign was there, in the direction where they were all looking, of an approaching storm, that this discovery was immediately received by the others with a loud laugh, and Sally Bird was provoked to use some strong and rather bitter words against those who were amusing themselves at her expense. Very shortly, however, the notice of the whole party was drawn towards an open phaeton, no very common sight in that out-of-the-way part of the country, coming across the heath in an easterly direction. “ Whose carriage is it ?” asked half a dozen shrill voices at once, as soon as the sound of wheels was heard through the stillness of the evening hour. But

no one could answer the question, till Sally again exclaimed, "I do think I see my sister Ann in it." Another loud laugh followed these words, and the thoughtless girls inflicted a second time upon their too sensitive companion the pain of being ridiculed. But Sally, though hurt and angry too, was silent; and soon after descending a small hollow amidst the high furze and appearing again, the carriage came near enough to prove that she was right. A man wrapt in a coachman's coat was driving, and beside him, muffled up in a cloak and dripping wet, sat Ann Bird. Surprise was the first feeling of the whole party, for Ann had been some time in service at a clergyman's house twelve miles off, and she had not very lately been heard of; sorrow, however, soon took the place of surprise when they saw the carriage driven up to Bird's cottage by the heath-side, and the poor young woman was helped out of it and led into the house, too tottering and feeble to walk without help. Her mother was called to attend upon her, and the groom, after saying what a storm had overtaken them in their journey, and wondering that it had not reached that spot, took a note out of his pocket and gave it to Mrs. Bird. It stated how ill

Ann had been in consequence of a fall down the cellar stairs, and that the doctor had recommended her change of air. It also added that in the hope of her speedy recovery, her mistress would keep the place open for her, and it ended with proposing that her next sister, Sally, who had already lived in a farm house, should be sent over in a day or two to undertake for a time the duties of her place.

Sally's things were soon got ready, and though really sorry for her sister's misfortune, she was a good deal excited by the prospect of going to Mr. Whitley's. Nor, when she got into the cart which was to convey her and her trunk part of the way to her new place, could she help reminding one or two of her friends, who were wishing her good bye, that it was not herself but they that had been mistaken on the Monday evening, both about the thunder and her sister. After parting with these, she greatly enjoyed her journey, which was nearly all through a country entirely new to her. Of pleasing her mistress and being happy during her stay, Sally felt no doubt, for in truth she was a little apt to be self-confident. Besides, she had often heard of Mrs. Whitley's kindness, and was sure that she would be willing to put

up with some inconvenience from regard to a good servant, who had met with an accident while in her service. Two things, however, a little damped the pleasure of Sally's journey; the pain of having parted from a very dear sister whom now she scarcely ever saw, and a fear lest this change should hinder her from offering herself for the bishop's blessing at the approaching Confirmation. Musing upon these matters, and enjoying the sweet breath and happy quiet of a bright summer's evening, together with the freshness of hope so natural to a young mind, she soon found herself at the place where Mr. Whitley's cart was to meet her, and not long afterwards at the gate of Greenham parsonage. And in a very few days, thanks to her own care and attention, and to her mistress's kindness and forbearance, she made herself quite at home, and was very happy indeed; except only that, now and then, her fellow-servants would laugh at her for what they called her odd ways and country notions.

The young housemaid had not travelled very far, but still she had passed into the diocese of another bishop, where there was to be no Confirmation that year. One day when her mistress *had* taken occasion to speak to her rather seri-

ously, she expressed her sorrow at having missed the opportunity of being confirmed, now that she was nearly eighteen years of age, and very desirous of partaking in the blessings of that holy rite. No particular notice was taken of this remark at the time, but on the next day a letter was sent to the clergyman of the parish in which Sally's father lived, and when his consent was gained, Mr. Whitley himself undertook to instruct the young candidate for Confirmation. It was agreed that she should go home for a day or two, and be confirmed in the same diocese in which she had been born and baptized. All went on well, only poor Ann's fall had turned out to be a worse one than had been at first supposed; still her sister appeared to fulfil the duties of her place so satisfactorily that it seemed likely enough, even if Ann were unable to return, that Sally would be her successor. Mr. Whitley's instructions were regularly given, and when the day of Confirmation arrived, Sally was better prepared to understand the meaning and to feel the importance of that solemn office of the Church, than perhaps most young people are. She returned home on the day before that on which the bishop was expected, and glad and joyful *was the meeting which took place between*

her and those whom she best loved upon earth. Never did the bells of her native village sound so sweetly in her ears as upon that evening, but though her heart was overflowing with joy, still she did not forget that her short holiday had been given her, not for purposes of worldly enjoyment, however natural and harmless, but for spiritual improvement. In compliance with her mistress's desire she went up to the vicarage after tea, and was examined by Mr. Bailey, who was satisfied with her answers, and gave her a ticket for the following day. He added some earnest and excellent advice, and gave her a few books with which kind present Sally was highly delighted. As to his advice, she did not much like the very part of it which she most needed, and which was most likely to be useful to her. Partly guided by his own recollection of her character as a school girl, and partly from what he had heard lately from her mistress, he strongly urged upon her this precept: "never to mind being laughed at for doing what she felt sure that it was her duty to do." Like sick persons, whose stomachs turn sometimes against the very medicine that is most likely to cure them, so how often do our minds draw back with dislike from the very counsel, which, of all others,

is best fitted to amend our faults and strengthen our souls.

It was five or six weeks since the Confirmation had taken place; Ann Bird had rapidly recovered her strength, and was now hoping soon to take her place again. Sally was in rather an excited state of mind, wavering between her sincere joy at her sister's recovery and her regret at leaving so comfortable a situation. One evening, after it was dark, while her mind was full of these contrary feelings, and she felt more disposed to cry than to do any thing else, she ran up stairs to her own room, wishing to avoid being seen by her fellow-servants, of whose ridicule and thoughtless banter she was somewhat afraid. Little do people think when they make sport of the tender feelings of others, particularly of the young, how cruelly they are acting. Those who are vexed and distressed beyond measure, if they happen accidentally to hurt the bodies of their fellow Christians, will often enjoy, as a sort of treat, the agony of mind endured by those whom they are wounding with their words which are "very swords." Scarcely had Sally shut the door of her room and begun to feel that she need no longer check her tears, when the bell rang; a

very unusual thing to happen between dinner and tea-time in this regular household. The rising tears were soon wiped away, and in a minute or two the door of the drawing room was opened, and the young servant stood there, waiting to know the pleasure of her master and mistress who were both sitting within.

“We want to speak to you, Sally,” said Mrs. Whitley, “so you may come in and sit down, as you used to do when your master was preparing you for Confirmation.” After she had seated herself in the old place, her mistress continued; “I need not tell you that we are, upon the whole, pleased with your conduct since you have been here; indeed, what I am going to tell you will be proof enough of this. I have recommended you to my sister, who wants a housemaid, and who has agreed to try you, though she thinks you scarcely old enough for her place.” Sally thanked her mistress, and her eyes brightened with the hope of hearing all about this new situation. But she was disappointed. Mrs. Whitley promised to tell her all the particulars the next day, and contented herself for the present with giving her a few hints, and mentioning one or two faults connected with her mode of performing

the duties of the household. This was soon done. "And now," she added, "your master will say a few words upon far more important matters, things of much deeper concern to us in whose family you have been living, as well as to yourself, whose everlasting welfare may depend, more than you think, upon the course you are now beginning to follow."

"I am going to speak seriously to you, Sally," said Mr. Whitley, kindly, "and do not be hurt or offended by what I may have to say. If I try to point out any fault in you, it will be done as your friend, not as your enemy; from a sense of duty, not for the sake of finding fault. You always seem inclined to speak the truth openly; answer then my questions, if you please, frankly and without reserve. Do you really try to become daily a better and less imperfect Christian than you were? Are you humbly praying and earnestly endeavouring to be more serious and careful and devout, more anxious to please God, and more afraid of offending Him, than you were before your Confirmation?"

The reply was that she could not tell. In fact, she was soon brought to confess that, much as *she had thought* of the Confirmation before-

hand, since that time the feeling of excitement had passed away, and she had suffered other things to take up most of her thoughts and attention. After a quiet but earnest statement of the danger of thus slacking her pace at the very beginning of her Christian course, her master continued ; “ Why is it, Sally, that you always sit down during the prayers ? I have once before spoken to you on this subject, and I am sure that you have been taught to kneel when you were at school. Do you find in the Bible that any one there mentioned, even our Saviour Himself, ever sat down to pray ? Do you doubt that the humblest posture is the fittest for us fallen creatures to use when we are speaking to the King of kings ? ”

“ The truth is, sir, that I am afraid of people noticing me, if I should kneel down. ”

“ Nay, Sally, among my servants you are more likely to be noticed for not doing so. But would it not be better to learn to bear the remarks of people when we do our duty than to escape their remarks by leaving our duty undone ? However, this is not the chief thing I wish to say to you. We had both hoped to have seen you last Sunday week at the Lord’s Table, now that you are a confirmed member of Christ’s holy Church. But

you appear almost to have lost sight of your Confirmation, and its accompanying duties and privileges. What was it that kept you away after all the teaching you have had? You know the meaning of this holy Sacrament, you are well aware of the blessings that belong to it, you have been taught what is required of those who partake of it, and how grace is to be gained to partake of it worthily. You know, too, that our blessed Lord has Himself ordained that it shall be received by all His disciples. Do you not reckon yourself one of these, and if one of His disciples, why do you stay away from the feast to which all are bidden to draw near?"

It was some time before Sally's conduct was traced up to its real source, the fear of ridicule. At last, she candidly owned that, if she had been likely to stay in her place, she believed that she would have done what most of her fellow-servants did, what she knew to be her duty, and what, as her duty, she was really (in one sense) desirous of doing. But she had a wholesome dread of beginning to act rightly and then leaving off again, of putting her hand to the plough and looking back, and she looked forward with alarm to the sneers of some of her thoughtless companions at home, the very friends who had

ridiculed her for hearing more quickly than they did the distant storm. During her last short visit at home she had been joked about having become so very very good, and she could not bear the thoughts of having to endure this frequently and in a greater degree. So, wilfully shutting her eyes against the fact that, go where we will, we are sure to find people ready to laugh at us for doing our duty carefully, she had resolved to put off carrying out her good resolutions to another opportunity. She intended, in fact, to walk in what she knew to be the right way, as soon as that right way began to look smooth and easy, as the wrong way always looks. But when would that time arrive?

A somewhat long conversation followed in which Mr. Whitley tried to put the whole matter clearly before her. Sally, whose warm feelings were not less keenly alive to kindness and to a sense of duty than to the power of ridicule, was deeply affected by all she heard; and the tears with which she had been before just ready to mourn over her near departure from a happy place, were now actually shed over her recent neglect of her Christian duties. When she was leaving the room her master went to his desk, and took out of it a small printed pamphlet.

“There, Sally,” said he, giving it to her, “take this, and not merely read it, but think over it carefully. It may help to keep alive that wholesome fear of regarding the scorn of men more than the commandments of God, which now seems to be awakened in your soul. Ten years ago I had charge of a larger parish than this, and there have I often watched with pain the power of ridicule over the minds of men. Often to my knowledge has the fear of being laughed at had an effect upon the conduct of my neighbours which no other motive would have produced. Sometimes I have seen good done and self-sacrifices freely made from this low and unworthy motive ; but even when good comes out of evil, it is no excuse for those who do the evil. More often, however, evil has been the only result. The tract I now have in my hand was written expressly for my former parishioners, and amongst them (including persons of all classes) I am thankful to say it seemed to be blessed and useful. Here I have not needed it so much, but your case, my young friend, appears to be one where it may do good. God grant it may be so, and keep you from every evil way, and lead you into all that is good and upright *both now and always*, for your Saviour’s sake !”

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Soon after Sally's return home Mr. Bailey was speaking to her of her duties after Confirmation, when of her own accord she produced the tract, telling him at the same time how she got it. Mr. Bailey borrowed it, and thinking that it deserved to be more widely known, requested leave of its author to reprint it. He is happy to say that Sally's character is very much improved. Oh that many of those who tremble before the scorn of man, and yet but lightly regard the words of the Lord of Hosts, might receive the like benefit with her from what is here written !

TRACT.

ON one occasion, among the other trials of our blessed Lord in the flesh, it is recorded that " they laughed Him to scorn." And again, " the cruel mockery which He had to endure amid His dying agonies was not one of the least of His bitter sufferings." Strange and absurd to think of the fallen ruined creature ridiculing Him who made it in its first perfection ; to hear of the strayed sheep laughing to scorn the Good Shepherd, who came to seek and to save that

which was lost ! But this very strangeness and absurdity served only to add weight to the Saviour's load of suffering, and to shew more clearly than ever the weakness and wickedness of the generation in which He lived. Yet, with all their weakness and wickedness, they were perhaps but a fair sample of that evil world whose friendship is enmity against God. They spoke wisely, according to the wisdom of the world, when they spoke with a smile of scorn of One to all outward appearance so humble, attempting to raise the dead ! They judged well, according to this world's judgment, when they turned to mockery the mere notion of the Son of God being crucified and hanging on a tree. Those, most likely, who were guilty of this, were what were then called, and still are called, shrewd and sensible men ; men, that is, who walk by sight and not by faith. It was by these worldly-wise ones that the Son of God was despised and rejected in the days of His flesh, and too often may we still hear the same class of men making light of His claims, refusing to acknowledge His Divine character or His all-sufficient atonement, now that He is exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high.

What then am I to expect, having been bap-

tized into the Body of Christ, having been confirmed with the Holy Spirit, and fed with better than angels' food at the Table of my heavenly Father? Why, I must make up my mind to meet with scorn and ridicule in the course of my Christian life. I must not shrink from doing so; no, not for one single moment, though the whole world were offered me as the miserable price of being ashamed of my Master and of my Master's words. If they have called Him Beelzebub, am I to expect a better name from them so long as I continue to be His faithful servant? The wise and the foolish ones, the great men and the mean men of the world are, (like the motley crowd assembled round the ruler's house,) bold enough to laugh to scorn our Lord and His doings. What then have I to do but to be ready to meet their scorn, and to welcome it, for my Master's sake? Who are beloved by the world but those that are its own, or who hated by it except those that are not of it, but have been chosen out of it by the Lord? Scorn is one of the world's favourite weapons, one of the very keenest it employs against those whom it hates. Against this the soldier of Christ must be armed beforehand. "Above all," he is told, to take "the shield of faith, wherewith" he

“shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” (Eph. vi. 16.)

The very first step towards beating an enemy is to be ready to meet him, to know who and what he is. I see that unless I forget that it is my duty manfully to fight under Christ’s banner, I must reckon upon having more or less of the world’s scorn to endure. And what is this scorn of the world, which men seem often to be more afraid of than they are of the everlasting doom of the Judge of quick and dead? “The whole world lieth in wickedness,” so the Bible teaches us. It tells us, likewise, these glad tidings, that “the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John v. 19, 20.) Now truth, Christian truth I mean, not such sham and spurious truth as each man “troweth,” or fancies for himself, is strong enough to bear all manner of scorn; it is immortal, and is sure therefore to outlive all the ridicule that the world may choose to cast upon it, like a clover-field, which, the more it is trampled under foot in the dark and dreary days of winter, becomes only so much the more rich and beautiful and fragrant and fruitful in the

days of summer sunshine ; so truth, press it down as you will in its day of trial, is sure to become only so much the more glorious in its day of glory. And thus it is that the disciple of Christian truth conquers even whilst he is suffering, whereas the disciple of this world, even while triumphing, is sure to lose in the end.

How great is the power of truth, even in matters which have nothing to do with religion, and which are not revealed in the Holy Scriptures ! There was a time when the wise ones of the world, the self-sufficient philosophers of that day, laughed to scorn the truth that it is our earth which moves round, and not the sun which goes round it. I have myself, I confess, joined in the universal laugh of scorn awakened at the idea of men travelling by steam forty or fifty miles in an hour. Yet who now dares to ridicule the fact of the earth turning round every day upon its axis ? Or who receives (as men would have done a few years ago) with a loud laugh, the declaration of any one starting from London a few minutes before ten, that he hopes to be in Exeter, nearly two hundred miles off, at half past two ? It is much the same with far more important truths, those belonging to our *holy religion*, and bearing upon the everlasting

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welfare of our souls. The heathens, sixteen or seventeen hundred years ago, laughed to scorn the very same truths of the Gospel at which now unbelievers or half-believers are busily mocking. The heretics and schismatics of the early ages of Christianity have well nigh forestalled all the errors and used beforehand all the weapons of unholy scorn, in which their unhappy successors are now boasting, as new discoveries of an enlightened age! But what of that? The memorial of the perished heathenism of the apostles' time has almost wholly disappeared. And "like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt," even so has the rapid succession of one form of error and strife after another continually been. Falsehood after falsehood, and delusion upon delusion, have in turn arisen, and flourished, and withered up as quickly as grass before the scorching sun, and then given place to some new deceit or some old one newly revived. Yet amidst all this confusion the word of God is still abiding; yea, and it will abide for ever. The people of Jerusalem are citizens of the "city of peace," even though they dwell in captivity, amid Babylon "the city of confusion and division." (Article XX.) *The Church of the living God remains,*

as of old, the "witness and keeper of Holy the pillar and ground of the truth." His the gates of hell never have prevailed against it; no, nor ever shall they. Scorn and ridicule are in their very nature things earthly, and they shall perish. Truth cometh down from above, therefore it abideth evermore. Shall the sun be blotted out from the sky, or the power of mortal man, than truth shall be brought into nothing before the force of ridicule, shorn of its glory and lose its everlastingness because they that sit in the seat of the scornful have shaken their heads, and pointed their fingers against it.

The rock on which our Blessed Lord has His Church stands fast indeed from generation to generation; but the waves of this vengeful bitter scorn and impious fury are ever rising about its base, though they cannot prevail. Scorn and ridicule are in one sense means of proving truth, because it shews itself to be true by overcoming these in the end; and the power which overcometh these mere worldly weapons of our faith. Yet in another sense these are not means of proving truth. That is to say, we must not suppose that certain things are true only because people laugh them to scorn.

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have the powers of evil always treated the truth of God. From the very first it has ever been the same. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," were the words of eternal truth. "Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," were the scornful words of the old serpent, the father of lies. And so it has been ever since. While the ark was preparing to the saving of Noah's house, and the flood was gathering for the ruin of the rest of the world, the men of perdition mocked at the children of salvation. The unheeded warnings of righteous Lot, the fate of the dreamer Joseph at the hands of his own brethren, and a thousand other examples, may teach us to expect that sin and pride and ignorance, in their blindness, will laugh to scorn the voice of truth, and turn into ridicule the peaceful calls of mercy and righteousness.

But I need not dwell upon these examples. I will turn to one great example which may well stand in the place of all others. In the Gospel I behold, and tremble while gazing upon the awful sight, "God manifest in the flesh," *and man laughing* Him to scorn. Christ was

about to recal to life the ruler's daughter, yet lo, He is mocked and ridiculed in His choicest acts of mercy by the very beings whom He came to enlighten and to save from death! No doubt this was done ignorantly, yet it was done. And if the Lord of glory endured such scorn from His own fallen creatures, mere dust and ashes, for my salvation, shall I shrink from bearing cheerfully whatever ridicule the world may heap upon me for the sake of His Holy Name and everlasting Gospel? Let the gracious word of promise to the Church be always before my mind, let it be deeply graven in the heart of every one of her faithful members; "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn." (Isaiah liv. 17.) A few short rules may, with the help of the divine grace, assist me in my daily endeavours to follow, in this respect, the blessed steps of Christ's most holy life.

1. Never provoke scorn.
2. Never return scorn.
3. Never mind scorn.

Then if the fire is kindled in the world around me, it will not have been lighted by me, nor shall I be consumed by it; it will not so much

as hurt a single hair of my head. Whether it is the Christian's belief or his practice that is ridiculed by the world, it matters not; in each case the true Christian comes forth unhurt, and can pray for the very men who are sneering against him. How few persons in any age have ever believed the Gospel with all their hearts, and yet escaped the scorn of their fellow men! Yet some will tell me that the faith which the world despises is very likely not to be true, and that at any rate I need no longer hold fast by it. Vain words indeed, as if the approbation of worldly men were any test or proof of the truth of God! Rather, if I need among the endless carnal divisions of these times any witness of men to the truth once (and once for all) delivered to the saints, will I lay hold of the continued chain of witness borne by prophets, apostles, and martyrs; rather will I listen to the record borne to the doctrines of One Lord, one faith, one baptism, by the holy Church throughout all the world. The three Creeds, which "may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture, ought thoroughly to be received and believed," (Article VIII.,) and having stood so many ages against all the scornful efforts of the unstable and unbelieving, there is

no risk of their now giving way. Built, therefore, blessed be God! upon the foundation of the apostles, and prophets, with Christ Himself for the chief corner-stone, what can all the blasts of vain doctrine, or the idle gales of man's opinion (more shifting and restless than the very winds and the waves), do to shake or disturb that foundation of rock which standeth sure, the foundation of that house in which we are builded together to be an habitation of God through the Spirit!

But the world is even yet more ready to laugh to scorn what Christians do rightly, than what they rightly believe. And how many, especially of the young, are frightened out of doing what they know to be their duty, lest the world should laugh at them for being better than their neighbours! Why, Christ gave Himself for them with this very purpose, that they might be better than other men; "that He might purify unto Himself a peculiar people," different from others, because, unlike the world in general, "zealous of good works." If I say my prayers, or study my Bible, or keep my Church, while many others neglect, or only half perform these plain Christian duties, those "many others" will laugh at me, perhaps, for being so very good. Alas! it

is no laughing matter ; it is not I that am so very good, but they that are so very careless and wicked. So, in like manner, if I try to take heed to my ways, remembering the day when an account must be given even for every idle word, if I endeavour for fear of falling to set God always before me, using every means of grace freely provided for me at no less cost than that of Christ's own life ; if I pray whenever I can, and kneel down whenever I pray, and bow the knees of my heart whenever I kneel ; if I make the Lord's day an honour and a delight, and dare not turn away, time after time, in cold indifference and carelessness from the Lord's Supper ; then I must make up my mind to be treated in something like the same way as that wherein my heavenly Master was treated. They have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, are those of His household to look for a better name, when they are doing their duty ?

The only way, then, to meet the scorn of the world is to be always ready for it and not to heed it a single moment. How differently does the Bible speak of these two classes of men, the worldly-wise and the really-wise. "Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law ;

fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment and the worm shall eat them like wool; but My righteousness shall be for ever, and My salvation from generation to generation." (Isaiah li. 7, 8.) God will keep in perfect peace the man whose mind is stayed on Him. And the world keeps in perpetual misery the man whose happiness rests upon its favour, who cannot quietly endure, even when he knows he is doing right, the scorn of his fellow-men. Satan already has gained the power of tormenting them who shrink from the bitter words, and writhe under the cruel laugh of the world, who would rather brave the wrath of the Almighty than the ridicule of man that is a worm. And yet, after all, what is the real value of this last, or how am I greatly concerned with it? It is not who has despised us, or who has praised and admired us, among men, that will one day absolve or else condemn us for ever before the judgment-seat of God. It is what we have been doing here in this lower world of trial, for according to our works will He judge us. And meanwhile, if I can but have grace to do well, to live as a Christian ought to live, welcome be the scorn and ridicule of the world around me!

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They laughed my Saviour to scorn, even when He was raising the dead. They despised and rejected Him, even when He was dying on the cross "for us men and for our salvation." God forbid, then, that I should ever shrink from bearing my humble share, as one of His members, in the sufferings of the Head of that body into which I have been baptized, that I should ever lose, from fear of the revilings of men, that crown of glory which, in spite of their revilings, He has purchased for me !

COLLECT.

O LORD, we beseech Thee, absolve Thy people from their offences; that through Thy bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the bands of those sins, which by our frailty we have committed: Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake; our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Man's way not God's way.

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PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, Prov. xv. ; *Evening*, Prov. xvi.

EPISTLE, Jer. xxiii. 5. GOSPEL, St. John vi. 5.
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So recently as in the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Proverbs, we were told that “there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death:” to-day the sixteenth chapter gives the same words. The aim of the two passages is perhaps slightly different: for the verses of the lesson seem to refer to those inducements to a wrong course, and to satisfaction with that course, which are caused by false teachers, bad advisers, and ill examples. “The sweetness of the lips increaseth learning . . . the instruction of fools is folly . . .” and then, “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” But the former passage has no such limits, and seems therefore rightly explained by Bishop Patrick; “Be not led merely by thy appetites: for that *makes* many actions seem innocent which

in the issue prove deadly destructive." We may well therefore take the whole doctrine to be this; fear false teachers who lower the standard of right and wrong; fear false advisers and the judgment and example of the world; fear the impulse of thine own earthly and sinful desires; for these are ways of life, in which a man's conscience troubles him not; in which he thinks that he is doing well; and yet, so far from this, his way is the way of death.

O fellow Christian, this is a very startling truth, for truth it is, coming from God's Word: and thought not only confirms our belief in it, but increases our fears. For who would not be shocked to be told in times of sickness; "It is no proof of safety that you seem well, and think yourself well. You may not perceive a symptom of the disease, but for all this it may be not far off, and your hours may be numbered?"

Now clearly this doctrine does not touch, or touches very slightly, the cases of great sinners, of hardened and abandoned men. Such persons do not really consider their own ways right. They think them less hopeful indeed than they are, and less dangerous. They think their wickedness common. They hold it to some

extent pardonable, but they do not go beyond this ; generally, they either do not consider at all, drive thought away, or else hope for a repentance before they die. They hold their sinful state light and terminable at will ; but they do not hold it to be right. It cannot be fully said of them that theirs is "a way which seemeth right" to them.

The doctrine then of these passages belongs rather to those who have a conscience, and who do not plainly contradict it. We say not that they have an enlightened conscience, a holy conscience. It is their very sin that they have not. But they have a conscience, and they do not act very much against it, but believe on the contrary that they act according to it. Well then, it may be said, why are such persons to be blamed ? How can a man be guilty who does not contradict his conscience ?

Now in answer, let us first call to mind the Word of God ; "the end thereof are the ways of death." Such a state must be guilty, or the just Judge would not pronounce such judgment. But if we must go beyond this, and know how and why, let us do so ; only not for faith's sake. If we are believers, God's Word must *satisfy us*. What He has said is enough. It is

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holy, just, and true, because it is His who is holy, just, and true. Not for faith's sake, then, but for knowledge, and for the glory of God, we go on to see more clearly into this, if so we may. And, would we understand rightly, we must not now confuse the case of those men of whom we speak, with that of the heathen, or the Christian poor. It is not of men who act up to their light, and can gain no more, of which these words speak; but of those who can have the true light and have not, because they will not; of those who have lighted a torch from human opinion and their own desires, and walk by it rather than by the Sun of Righteousness. Their sin is, that their God has set up a kingdom not of this world, and placed them in it; they still take the laws and customs of the world for their guide, and even explain the kind and pure law of Christ's kingdom by the old and corrupt law of the world. They do not purely seek to know the truth, loving it and desiring it, but are content with what comes to them without effort; and to that which does come, they apply the opinion and practice of others and their own wishes. They take indeed the Bible, but there is a commentary upon every text which deadens and darkens it; &

imentary saying, "These words can never mean what they seem to mean in their strictness, or we could not keep them. And these words, again, can only be for great saints and not for general use, or they would condemn all men." Thus they make the Word of God of no effect by their traditions, by the examples of men, and by their own practice.

But this frightful evil will appear more plainly in many instances. Consider the pursuit of gain without dishonesty, without cruelty, without neglect of religion, it is still quite unchristian in its effects upon men. They sacrifice their devotions for it to a great extent. They indeed still pray; but for how short a time, and with what darkness of spirit! They have no eye or heart for meditation. They know nothing of watching unto prayer; nothing of coming to God before the morning watch; nothing of thinking their last thought to Jesus, Who died for them, and their first thought to Jesus, who rose for them. They know nothing of incurring any risk for His sake, Who for their sakes gave all. They feel themselves too worldly to communicate, or if they do so, it is but once in a while, as a strict duty, without heart, without desiring, without longing. And still worse,

although not unjust, they are often hard; hard bargainers; in worldly things, great receivers, and small givers. A few yearly subscriptions suffice, and now and then some help to workmen, and dependents, whom they are almost obliged to assist. Where in all this is Christian love, or Christian zeal, or Christian watchfulness? Where is the laying up treasure in heaven? Who, coming from the time of the Apostles, would say that such a man is a Christian? Yet he has no uneasiness. He is conscious of no sin. He repeats to himself his duty to his children; and how good it is to be industrious; he knows that he rather shines than is dark in comparison with many others: and therefore he lives at peace with himself; taking all that is said of self-denial, and poverty, and prayer, as belonging to the clergy, or to times of persecution, or at any rate to other circumstances and other persons. His way seems right unto himself. But is it in the way of life? Is it the way to heaven? Is there any thing heavenly about it, any thing like heaven? Has it heaven for its object on earth? A road leads from one place to another, being prepared for this purpose. Does such a life set out from earth, tend towards heaven and approach it? Look at this plainly. Is

such a course the way of life ; and if not, can it be any thing but the way of death ?

Or consider the soft life and self-indulgent. We see numberless Christians who give themselves up to following out their own comforts and pleasures without fear. Others have laboured for them, and they have enough without toil ; or sometimes the busy seeker of gain, and the luxurious man, are united. Some men work hard all the business hours of the day, and directly these are over, throw aside all serious thoughts and only think of enjoyment.

Now we might have hoped, and surely God expects, that those whom He has blessed with means of support without labour, and who have therefore much time, would give of that time largely to His service. They have no excuse for not doing so. They cannot say with the poor, " we have no time to read, we have no time to pray. The daily prayer bell sounds, but we cannot obey it." Therefore God expects of them close study of His perfect law, frequent devotions besides works of love for His Church, and for His poor. He expects and finds not. They also who labour and labour prosperously, who when they have ended business hours, find that *they can* put aside their cares, and dismiss

the subject of their callings, who have time to enjoy themselves as well as to labour, we might have hoped of these, and surely God expects it of them, that leaving their cares they would rejoice to turn to Him; that they would feel like bullocks loosened from the yoke, and run with a free heart the way of His service, refreshing themselves in the pastures of His Word, and with the streams of His grace.

Is it too much to expect, when the slave at eventide turns His sad heart towards His native country, and remembers the hut, and the wood, and the stream of his childhood, that the Christian, released for a few hours from the bondage of the world, should more gladly hear of his home, his far home; should remember Jerusalem which is above?

Is it too much to hope, when parents and brothers who, when all the day long they have had no time to think of their sweet homes, of tender children, and the smile of home and "mutual look where hearts are of each other seen;" as soon as the doors of the office or the shop are closed, or the horses stabled, or the ship moored, turn with eager pleasure to enjoy the love of those whom they had been compelled to forget; when this is the case, is it too much

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to ask that angels and saints, and the Christian brotherhood, and the worship of the Christian's home, and of the Father of all, should receive men's forward love and eager embrace, when the work of life pauses at the close of the day?

Alas, it is very sad, that even these sweet innocent delights, the special mercies of God, memorials of His love, calls to serve Him, warnings of our duty, refutations of all vain excuses; it is sad that these are the very protests by which men justify their neglect of God, and regard their own way as right, though it be not His way.

How blameless such a life seems to worldly eyes! what respect and praise it receives from men! It is neither too harsh nor too relaxed. A man capable of business, and of home love, and good friendship, seems a perfect man to others and to himself. Yet try him by the simple question, who has his heart? what does he most love? what does he seek? for what is he acting? for what is he preparing himself? and who can any more say that his way is the way of life; and what else then is it but the way of death?

Add to this indulgence, as so many do add, love of *eating* and drinking, expense in fur-

niture, servants, amusements hurtful and almost a scandal, and the rest of the luxuries and pleasures of ordinary people of property. Take into account also the accompanying evil, that the poor starve for want of means thus squandered, and the hands of the Church are cramped, and a worldly, thoughtless, and really godless air spreads over society like a dewy mist, and the way of God is hidden. Yes, it is all this which darkens the path of Christians. A cloud of evil custom shuts out the light of heaven, and men do not see the way in which they walk. They are conscious of no great sin. They only do what others do, and those the most respectable. They would be laughed at were they to change. It would break up all the present state of society; it would create ill-will and a thousand evils. So men think and say; and thus "the instruction of fools is folly," thus, as was said before, men darken wisdom with words, a darkness is formed, and men see not whither they go; their way seemeth right unto them, they are on the broad way, and they do not know that it is not the narrow.

Now these are two instances formed by taking classes of men. But we come to the same conclusion by recording particular duties and neg-

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lects. Thus the plain duty and most necessary exercise of fasting is almost entirely disused, because of the traditions of men, because of the excuses which man makes for himself. Thus again, a most grievously small portion of our people are communicants, because communion has come by example to seem generally unnecessary to salvation, and through this many pleas and deferring pretexts of individuals. Of the same kind is single attendance upon Sunday in town and country; the custom of the place fixes which service men will attend, whether morning or evening; but no reasoning, no entreating, can induce the mass of parishioners to enter God's House twice upon the same day. To ask this of them seems unreasonable; to do it appears needless. There is a settled established rule and custom against doing more than they have done; and habit and indolence forbid them breaking through it. It is quite as much a fixed and ruled thing to serve God very little, very poorly and coldly, as it is to serve Him at all.

Now then can there be any more doubts as to the sinfulness of this human way, contrary to God's way; or as to the nature of its sinfulness? *Is it any thing less, any thing else, than setting*

up a new law, as if there had been another revelation ; as if a second and lower religion like that of Mahomet had been dispersed after and over the religion of Christ? No, this choosing a human way against God's way, this taking the practice of others and our own habits and wishes as our rule of life, is nothing less than setting up another Gospel. Gospel shall we say? Nay, Gospel means God's Word. It is a setting up man's word against God's Word, man's will against God's will. It is making man his own God. Is it unjust then, is it hard to say of such rebellious ways, "the end thereof are the ways of death?"

But we need not mention the just judgment, the great sentence and punishment of such a course. A life not lived to God is its own judgment, its own punishment; it is self-destructive. It is enough to say simply that such ways are ways of death, that men die upon them and by them. Men's souls die of gain; die of luxury; die of self-indulgence; die for want of prayer; die without communion; die for want of Christ; die as branches do when severed from the vine; die as limbs do into which the life blood flows no longer; die as *the sick* without a physician, and the hungry

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without food, and the naked under burning suns or freezing winds. Men die ; their souls die long before the judgment-day ; before the throne is set and the books are opened, men are dead ; because they walked upon their own way, despising the way of God, and knew not whither it led them until they were lost.

O for our souls' sake, then, let us search, search long and anxiously into our ways. Let us compare them with the pure Word of God ; with the holy discipline of the Church ; with the examples of saints, who are not beyond what we ought to be, though we be so far behind what they were. Let us not be angry, but thankful for rebuke ; passing by no arousing time nor circumstance ; Advent or Lent ; sickness or sorrow, or danger, or neighbouring death ; opening our hearts to the light, that it may reveal our darkness ; praying, praying with all our might against a self-deceiving heart ; entreating that we may know all, know the worst, fearful as it may be, now whilst the canker may be cut out, now whilst the dying soul may be healed by heavenly medicine, and restored by heavenly food ; altogether giving up ourselves sincerely, and with hearts to God, saying,

“Search me, O God, and know my heart.”



Where duty lies,
There is highest sacrifice ;
Oft in lowliest tasks on earth,
Faith doth shew her genuine birth,
Giving them immortal worth ;
And with incense fills the urn,
Which before the Throne doth burn.
* * * * *

“ Holiness unto the Lord ”

Marks the staff, the scrip, the board,
Harp, and spade, and book, and sword,—
All the Royal Priesthood use,—
Faith in all doth worth infuse.
'Tis God's temple all around,
Upon all His Name is found ;
It is the great Sabbath Day,
Lit by the great Morning's ray :
In the things that meanest lie
Hideth best Humility ;
And the varied minds of men,
And the varied virtues, when
They are lit by holy Love,
Lustrous are as gems above ;
Each with its own colour dight,

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All replete with living light ;
Unto each its hue is given,
Varied as those stones of Heaven.
Love which, like an Angel's sight,
Sees all things divinely bright,
And each duty fills with rays,
Fairer than the chrysoprase.

Lagging hours they seem to linger,
Yet thus each may have a finger,
Whereby it may point to Heaven ;
While the lengthening shades of even
On life's dial fall, and now
Darker shadows round thee go,
Yet thy works may pass before,
Waiting thee,—a blessed store,—
In their number, weight, and measure,
Laid up in enduring treasure.

THE BAPTIST

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY,

OR

THE SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE ADVENT.

The Year's remnant.

PROPER LESSONS : *Morning*, Prov. xvii. ; *Evening*, Prov. xix.

EPISTLE, Jer. xxiii. 5. GOSPEL, St. John vi. 5.

THE year wanes ; nay, the Church's year is almost at an end ; its light is almost gone ; a little flickering of the flame for a few days more, and then it will be burnt out. Holy Advent is close at hand, when the Christian year begins its course afresh. We have gone through many days ; we have been led to ponder on all the great Christian truths in turn, and to learn all the Christian duties which flow therefrom ; we have journeyed stage by stage through all the parts of Gospel truth ; Christmas, Epiphany, Passion Week, Easter, the day of Ascension, Whitsuntide ; these have been the stations whereat the Church has bidden us pause, that we might separately consider each separate truth revealed to us by the Spirit of truth ; we were brought, as it were, to the cradle of our Lord ; we passed on to the betrayal, the death, and sufferings of our Lord ; thence to His

Resurrection, His Ascension, the coming of the Holy Ghost. Then through the season of Trinity, which forms half of the Christian year, we were instructed in Christian duties, in the several parts of a holy life, that our faith might plentifully bring forth the fruit of good works.

This course is now nearly at an end ; soon will Advent again begin ; soon will the wheel of another year begin to move round ; soon will those that shall be still alive again be invited to the Christmas feast. And what remains to us who are alive this day ? Are we not at the end of a feast ? Have we not had a great feast all this year, one greatly lengthened out ? We have had a feast of many hundred days ; many suns have risen and set ; many days of health and strength have been vouchsafed ; many nights of sweet and refreshing sleep, many worldly blessings and temporal mercies, have crowded this portion of our life which is almost closed, so that it has been indeed like unto a feast. The Lord Himself has fed us ; the Lord has nourished us ; the Lord has preserved our life ; the Lord has blessed our labours, and given us the means of life. Not by miracles have we been fed, not by any supernatural increase of bread ; but so great, so constant has been God's ordinary love, that we have

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needed no wonderful or unusual exercise of His power. In all these days we have tasted that the Lord is gracious; yea, we have done more than taste His benefits, we have feasted upon the good things provided us by the Lord.

But all these days have been loaded with other and greater gifts, to which I could rather turn your thoughts. We have had great treasures of heavenly wisdom offered to our souls, great means of grace, an abundance of spiritual privileges, a horn of spiritual plenty, full even to the brim. Every day of all the year has yielded many opportunities of shewing forth our faith, of yielding ourselves to Christ's will, of keeping the commandments, of bringing forth plenteously the fruit of good works, of adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. And not only have we had countless opportunities of serving Him, whose we are, of wearing our daily cross, the badge of Christian soldiership, but we have had continual offers of heavenly strength, that we might be truly harnessed for the day of battle, and might be made equal to the fight. Not only has the Lord said to us, "Here, at home and abroad, in your labour and by your fireside, I have given you many occasions of doing Me service, and of proving yourselves to be My disciples in

deed and truth," but we have had daily offers of heavenly grace and strength. Day by day has grace been ready to descend on all the souls which have hungered and been athirst.

Especially do I beg you to count all the Lord's days that have gone over our heads, those days of greater feasting and greater grace which enrich our year. To those who have been minded to care for the nourishment of the inner man, those days have been feasts indeed. How much, and in how many ways, has grace been offered us therein. In each of these days of rest, when the plough, the spade, the earthly labour, should have been put aside, how many hours, how many spaces have there been for private prayer, for private meditation, for the private reading of God's word or other holy books. Think also of the public assemblings of the Church to which we have been so strongly called by the holy word of God, and the ministers whom He has sent. In God's house, too, so often open to our use, and ever sanctified by God's unseen presence, God has offered us not one, but many means of grace. In His holy place, how we have been invited to offer prayer, to join the prayers that have been offered up; how many portions of Holy Scripture have been read in our ears; how

many Psalms and spiritual songs full of God's praise have sweetened the air of the sanctuaries of God ; how many professions of the Christian faith have we had the privilege to repeat in the face of God and in the midst of His people ; how many words of exhortation have been delivered by the ambassadors of Christ, empowered by Him to watch over your souls. Above all, think how often the great Christian feast, the mysterious and heavenly feast of our Lord's Supper, so full of heavenly nourishment and spiritual strength, has been spread before us, and we earnestly invited to be the guests.

When then in this way we look back to all those spiritual blessings which have been offered all these days and weeks, in private and in public, at home and in the church, we see that God has indeed prepared a table in the wilderness, and that our cup has been full ; we see that He has been offering us in this place those great Christian privileges which His miraculous feeding of the multitude forcibly represents ; we see that He has been calling us away from our worldly cares and worldly labours, to hear the word of life, and to receive sustenance for our souls that we might be saved, while He Himself *was with us at those times*, ready to distribute as

much as we should need to as many as would come.

How we have used these means of grace it is for our consciences to consider. A spiritual feast we have had extended to us through all the year, opened out to us afresh, offered us continually, the very poorest of us and the richest of us being called with equal love by Him who hath no respect of persons, and hath set every man in his place. I only pray you to look back and see what has been within your reach. I only beg you to bring your consciences to this review and remembrance of times past ; of opportunities that are gone ; for it is needful for us to know that while the opportunities themselves are past, not so our responsibility ; we have yet to give account for our use or our neglect of all these gifts of God ; we have yet to answer at that dreadful day when the years of our earthly life, and all we did therein, will stand before us in the clear and piercing light of Christ Himself. Neglected sabbaths, contempts of the House of God, rejected sacraments, the waste of holy days and holy privileges, forgetfulness of prayer, the spurnings of their word of exhortation who have a right to exhort, week-day sins and carelessness of living, and hasty words, light oaths, hypocri-

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sies and deceits, greediness of gain, pride, and thoughts of self-importance, impureness and wantonness in our youth, all these things will come back to us, and be among the witnesses at the awful day of the judgment of our souls, when the gate of heaven shall be opened for the redeemed by the most glorious Jesus our Judge, and the gate of Hell for the lost.

While then we have need to repent of violated or wasted gifts of God which we have trodden under foot, on which we have turned our backs, or which we have used with careless hands ; and while we are thus on the very edge and farthest limits of the decaying, dying year, hear the words of Christ at the end of that miraculous feast, "gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." As our year's feast of grace is almost at an end, those words fit us now ; they are in place to-day ; they may be wisely read with spiritual eyes, and understood in a spiritual sense. Though we may somewhat start to think how quickly the feast has gone, how little of the year is left, and though a shade of melancholy may cross our souls to think how much we might have feasted, and how little of heavenly things we have tasted with our lips, still this is a saying of Christ, which is merciful as well as well-timed.

“gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.”

The whole year is not yet swept away; all our heavenly nourishment does not disappear at once, something yet remains, and these fragments we are not hindered from gathering up, nay, we are bidden frugally to pick them up. This Sunday is the last fragment of the Sundays of the Church's year; use it then with all the more earnestness and haste; so does your Saviour bid you do; the last should be spent the best; it should carry with it a more than common share of sincere devotion, that we may at least give the year a fringe of gold; we should husband all the portions of such a day; it is itself a remnant, it is not therefore as though we had much to spare.

Not only in God's holy house should we offer up some repentant prayer for time and gifts mispent, and seek for grace wherewith to sanctify our future life, but when we are alone, sitting in our house or walking by the way, should we try to fill the day with solemn thoughts concerning the condition of our souls. Confine not however serious thoughts to this holy day; gather up all the fragments of the year, that nothing be lost; turn the remaining week-days into seasons of especial self-searching and especial prayer; while

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you are in the midst of your earthly toils think of the swiftness and shortness of earthly life ; think of the hour of death and day of judgment ; think of the path which you have trodden, and ask yourselves whither it leads your soul. You need not leave your worldly toil to think of things like these ; in the hours of labour the spirit of a man may be busy upon the things of God, and yet his hand may be industriously sowing the seed, or tilling the land, or busy with the merchandise of his shop. In this way stir up the fading fire, husband what is left. Look round and see what good you can do, what fault you can repent of and mend, what grace you can obtain ; be frugal of all your time ; let “ nothing be lost ; ” lose no more, for to lose time is to lose your souls ; to misspend your days is to hurry into hell : it is upon the use of time that eternity depends. As is this short life, so is your eternal life. Now you sow, then you reap ; what you sow here, that you reap in the life to come ; evil grows evil, and the seed is multiplied, some ten, some thirty, some an hundred-fold ; so also is it with what is good.

Consider also that as you have reached the fragments of the year, so it may be that you *have nothing left* but the fragments of your life.

Are you in a state to die? What if, as concerns your life, you were at the end of the feast? Are you so closely walking with God, so entirely surrendering your will to Christ's, that if all were quickly gone, even the fragments of your life, you would have a good hope of being bidden to sit down at the eternal feast above, the supper of the Lamb which is without end, which continues for ever with perfect joy in the presence of God? Well does the Church bid to us to pray to God at this time to stir up our wills that we may plentifully bring forth good, and thus be plentifully rewarded. O my friends, use this prayer ; use it with all your hearts ; lift up your hearts. Pray God to stir up the gift that is in you, that nothing more of your life-time, nothing more of God's grace may be lost, that you may use faithfully what is left, to the glory of God and the salvation of your souls, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE ADVENT.

MY Prayer-book is a casket bright,
With gold and incense stored,
Which, every day, and every night,
I open to the LORD :
Yet when I first unclasp its lids
I find a bunch of myrrh
Embalming all our mortal life ;
The Church's Calendar.

GOD set the sun and moon for signs :
The Church His signs doth know,
And here—while sleeps the sluggish world,
She marks them as they go.
Here for His coming looks she forth
As, for her Spouse, the bride ;
Here, at her lattice, faithfully
She waits the morning-tide.

All time is hers, and, at its end,
Her LORD shall come with more :
As one for whom all time was made
Thus guardeth she her store ;
And, doating o'er her letters old,
As pores the wife bereft,
Thus daily reads the Bride of CHRIST,
Each message He hath left.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

As prisoners notch their tally-stick,
And wait the far-off day,
So marks she days, and months and years,
To ponder and to pray ;
And year by year beginning new
Her faithful task sublime,
How lovingly she meteth out,
Each portion in its time !

This little index, of thy life,
Thou, all thy life, shalt find
So teaching thee to tell thy days,
That wisdom thou mayst mind.
Oh live thou by the Calendar ;
And when each morn you kneel,
Note how the numbered days go by,
Like spokes in Time's swift wheel.

COXE'S CHRISTIAN BALLADS

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

ST. ANDREW'S DAY.

Prompt obedience.

PROPER LESSONS: *Morning*, Prov. xx. ; *Evening*, Prov. xxi.

EPISTLE, Rom. x. 9. GOSPEL, St. Matt. iv. 18.

WHEN our Lord in walking by the sea of Galilee saw the two brothers, Simon Peter and Andrew, casting a net into the sea, He stopped, and said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." And then it is said, "they straightway left their nets and followed Him." A great act is described in a few words; it was done "straightway;" the resolution to follow Christ was quickly formed and quickly carried out; the moment so direct a call was given, the brothers responded to it; they did not stop to argue; they did not balance losses against gains, and gains against losses; they did not deliberate, or talk the question over, or discuss different points, or weigh one thing against another, or use what the world would call prudent consideration, or ask for further evidence. As these words, "Follow Me," passed from our Saviour's lips, their *minds were made up*, the nets cast aside, a new

life entered on, old things given up, all changed. Obedience followed as quickly upon the command as the thunder after the lightning. One bidding was enough ; they allowed at once the claim our Lord made upon their service ; in short, they confessed Him to be their Lord, and obeyed Him as such. It was not a servant's part to do aught else at a master's command than obey ; so they judged, and so acted, doubtless blessing their Lord for giving them such a call.

What we have to remark, then, in the Apostle St. Andrew, as also in St. Peter, is the promptness of his obedience. The collect of the day dwells upon this point when it says that St. Andrew "readily obeyed the calling" of the Lord Jesus, and "followed Him without delay." This was one of the strong lights of his character ; indeed we know little of St. Andrew except this fact ; and yet in knowing this, we know much concerning him, and he becomes to us a great light on our Christian way. How can we lay too much stress on prompt obedience, or too much admire it ? How many souls are lost in hell, because they hesitate and debate and doubt, because they delay, put off, wait awhile before *they* act, finish this thing or that, bring this *scheme* to an end, or go through with that plea-

sure, before they commit themselves to Christ's way ! O the wretchedness, the sinfulness of hesitation and delay in the things that concern our peace ! "Come to me at a more convenient season ; come to me by-and-by ; come to me when I have got rid of this business ; come to me when the cares of my family are at an end ; come to me when this pleasure I am pursuing has passed away ; but do not come now : let me have time to think of it ; do not demand my service at once ; let me turn it over in my mind : do not say, "Follow Me," just yet ; I have many things in hand ; I cannot cast off all at once, and give myself at once to the hard ways of the cross ; it is a fearful step to take when I bind myself to a very strict and very religious course ; I will consider it ; I will follow soon." Thus men run on ; thus they trifle with the gracious calls of God ; thus they answer the divine voice that bids them follow Christ ; a long, long interval is there between the command and the obedience. With such men the struggle is to act "straightway ;" they are all for putting off ; something is in the way ; something must be finished first. Yet what is the worth of men who are so long in following, so slow, so reluctant in obedience ? Does not Christ love *the quick hearty surrender of ourselves when*

He calls? Does He not abhor the lazy lingering steps, the irresolute mind? Instant obedience is the proof of genuine faith; where the call of Christ is prized there men follow without delay; where they feel the greatness of the grace given to them, they dare not for a moment hold back; they could not hold back; they must be up and doing; they must start upon their feet like the soldier when the trumpet calls to the battle; obedience is an instinct in such a case; it does not enter into their heads to pause. "What risk," they say to themselves, "not to follow at once; what weak love, what weak faith! Will Christ call again? When He looks round and sees us going on as before in our service of the world, may He not turn to others and leave us to our fate, contenting Himself with having given us the choice."

We may see men who are for ever thinking of making a fresh start, and for ever putting off; the time never suits; first one thing and then another hinders them; they are always waiting for some better time, as they say; they intend great things, but do little; month passes over month, year after year, and yet there we see them standing at the same point, without courage to break through all hindrances, deadening their conscience by continual neglect of its friendly

voice, and frittering away their lives in unfulfilled intentions of obedience to Christ.

We see others, again, who wait till they see what their friends or neighbours do ; who will not act for themselves, who dare not be first in a good cause, who wait to see the cause sanctioned and countenanced, who depend upon others, and are ever thinking what those around them would say ; they will not strike out boldly, and take a bold course by themselves. And yet how could the Gospel have been preached or the Church increased, if such as St. Andrew had waited for the sanction and countenance of men ? They dared to go against the stream of men's opinions ; they saw their duty with clear eyes, and straight they went to it, without caring for man's judgment ; they did not stop to wonder what would be said of them ; it was enough to hear the words, " Follow Me." Christ was at once their all. It is easy to follow the multitude ; it is easy to act as others act ; but what God often requires is, that we should act alone ; that we should go first into the battle, that we should lead the way, that we should oppose the principles of those among whom we live, and drive boldly on, though the truth be dishonoured.

For instance, in a thoughtless, godless family,

one may be pricked in heart; one may hear sounding in the depths of his soul the still small voice, saying, "Follow Me." Is that one to put off Christ's service, to force conscience down, to go on as before, to delay obeying the Spirit till others in the family begin to be roused? Though all the rest should continue in the sleep of sin, surely that one should hasten to obey, should promptly enter on Christ's work, should not be afraid to be alone, should not linger on in worldly habits till others are wakened up. It was not to all that were by the sea of Galilee that our Lord called; not every fisher heard the words, "Follow Me." Our Lord often comes to one, and on finding prompt obedience, uses him as an instrument for converting others; what then, if such an one were to wait for the others? what if he were slack, slow, backward in doing God's will; what if he were to delay, and put off, and look out for others to be stirring in Christ's work? Surely the work of grace would fail, not only in himself but in others.

It is of course a trial to go forth first, to be among the foremost followers of Christ; it is a great trial to be alone in a house, to be the only one caring for the things of God; but where is it said in Scripture that the way of Christ is smooth?

If some difficulty now stands in our way, will not other difficulties rise up the moment this is smoothed away? will it ever be an easy thing to serve our Saviour? Is not His service a trial to every soul?

Take the case of St. Andrew; was not he, together with his brother, not only before his whole kindred, but before the world at large, in confessing Christ? When our Lord said, "Follow Me," did St. Andrew wait till he could see all his kindred, all his friends and neighbours, going forth as servants of Christ? On the contrary, he was bold as well as prompt in his obedience; he was among the first of all to cast himself at Christ's feet; here was his chief excellency, that he did not wait to be countenanced and sanctioned in his work by public opinion around him, by the example of others; he saw his own duty, and he promptly pursued it, without stopping to consider the opinion of men. His confession of Christ raised him in Christ's love for this very reason, that he made the confession when it was a new, a singular, and daring thing to do.

And how plainly does our Lord say to us, "Follow Me." One voice has been running on from our Baptism; as members of Christ's Church we have had a continual call, a call

renewed every day. Every day when we rise up from our beds, does Christ say to His members, "Follow Me."—Follow Me through the day in all deeds and words, in all thoughts and intents of the heart, in all holiness and love, in all humility and meekness, in all soberness and patience. Every morning this voice of our Lord sounds in our ears, if we have ears to hear, and hearts that listen out for His heavenly calls; we are always charged by Him to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life; promptly should we resolve to obey, promptly should we carry out our resolves. We should not say, "we will follow to-morrow; we will follow some day soon; we are hindered just now; we cannot quite make up our minds;" but we should remember the warning, "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Who knows what will be on the morrow? Who can lay out schemes for future obedience of Christ, and reckon confidently on future days? It is prompt obedience, obedience this very day, that our Lord requires; and if future days be added to us, in them the work of obedience may be enlarged and brought nearer to perfection.

And yet while at all times the keen ear of *faith* hears the voice of Christ saying, "Follow

" there are seasons when this voice speaks in
 louder and more urgent tones, when it presses
 itself into the ear, as though it would force its
 way past the ear, even into the inner chambers of
 the heart. Sometimes it is indeed with rousing,
 stirring, awakening tones, that our Lord speaks.
 It may be that we have turned away from the
 softer and softer voice, that we have risen morn-
 ing after morning without listening to the call of
 Christ, and thought little of His commandments
 through the day, and have lived carelessly, and
 have worn no cross, and have forgotten judgment
 day. With such the ordinary tone of our
 Saviour's voice will not do ; and the soul, drowsy
 and half asleep, lets the sounds pass by. To such
 there is need of stronger admonition ; and so the
 careless, the light-minded, the hardened, are
 sometimes forced to listen to a stronger voice in
 the very midst of their foolish or wicked ways.
 At what strange times have we had calls from
 God ! When men around us thought little of it, we
 have heard as it were God talking with us ;
 strong piercing thoughts concerning death, and
 judgment, have taken possession of us ; sometimes
 a flash of lightning, the certainty, the awful-
 ness of death has come upon us. In the midst
 of *after sinful pleasures*, we may have felt the

strong stirring of conscience ; the vanity of earthly pleasure and its hollowness has come home to the bitter has followed upon the sweet, and many thorns that pierce the lovers of earthly pleasure in the pursuit have pricked the soul, and given it many lessons on the worthlessness and the shortness of earthly joys.

And what shall we say of all afflictions, trials, all sorrows, all distresses, whether of body or mind ? Surely every trouble, every pang, every pang and care, does loudly speak ; and each a voice is to be heard, a voice of very tender love, and that is the voice of Christ, calling us Himself, drawing us away from the world, warning us from worldly ways, and saying, " Follow Me." Whenever we have any shape or form of affliction, it is an especial call ; God speaks ; the Spirit of God cries out to us ; the tones are distinct and clear ; there is no doubt what the affliction means ; it is itself a voice : " Follow Me," says our Lord to the afflicted ones on earth, to all the widows, and the fatherless, to the mourners, and to the lonely and neglected, to the sick and destitute. " Follow Me, for you are partakers of My Cross, you have My yoke upon you ; you are marked with the mark of the cross. Follow Me in the hour of sorrow and suffering

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I will lighten it ; I will help you to bear it ; I will make your affliction to blossom into beautiful flowers, and to bear good fruit. Leave all and follow Me, like My Apostle, through these rough ways ; I call you by your trials, obey My voice."

Thus does our Saviour speak ; and at such times there is both greater power in His words, and also a softer spirit in suffering men, a quicker ear, a more ready heart, for the words of God.

Taking then into consideration the stronger calls of God, whether they come in affliction or in other ways, we must all confess from our own experience that we have had them in our turn, that our spirit has at times been more deeply stirred, our souls more deeply moved, our thoughts more strongly drawn to heavenly things. And how, I ask, are such warning tones to be received ? Surely they demand prompt obedience, quick, decided, resolute action. Woe be to us if we put off, hesitate, go only a little way, leave off only a few faults, follow Christ with only half our hearts, satisfy ourselves with good intentions, take no immediate measures to break from all known sins, and content ourselves with some religious feelings, that pass through our hearts like water through a sieve. Whensoever our

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Lord says, "Follow Me," then rise up, leave all, follow Him; then away with all delays, excuses, lingerings over the world, worldly affections; let all go; let Christ be all; decide, act promptly, thoroughly devote yourselves to Christ; onwards, onwards in Christ's way. Surely at this time we may hear that voice amongst us, "Follow Me." What will you do? Will you follow? Will you go? Yea, He shall be our guide unto death.

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